

THE
CONVENT:
OR, THE
HISTORY
OF
JULIA.

VOL. II.

THE
CONVENT
OF THE
HISTORICAL



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OF
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V L. II.

L O N D O N,
Printed for T. LOWNDES, at his Circu-
lating Library, in Fleet-street.
MDCCLXVII.

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Printed for T. Lowndes, at his Office
in King Street, in Fleet Street.
MDCCLXXII.

THE
HISTORY
OF
JULIA,

Daughter to the Baron DE VALLIERE.

LETTER XXVII.

To LEONORA *from* ISABELLA.

THE lovely *Julia* is no longer
T confined to her bed, but her
deep and affecting melancholy
daily increases, not without some re-
turn of her delirium; yet she is ge-

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B

nerally

nerally silent, and frequently spends whole days in weeping — Unfortunately, her brother, who was the most likely to give her consolation, is ordered to join his regiment—He is deeply distressed, divided between the calls of honour and his tender friendship for a sister, whom he must leave in such a mournful situation—She has not yet been made acquainted with the sad news of his intended departure—He cannot prevail on himself to do it — He has besought me to save him that pain, by endeavouring to prepare my friend for his adieu — The amiable youth! — Ah, Madam, who can know his many virtues, his excellent disposition, and not admire him! — I am sent for.

Monday

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Monday Morning.

Alas, dear Madam, I still weep while I recollect the moving scene—The Chevalier is gone!—A second summons left us no time to prepare his now more than ever melancholy sister. She had been very ill this morning. Her brother, on entering her apartment, found us endeavouring to recover her from a swoon—He caught her in his arms; she recovered; she spoke; but it gave us little consolation, since it only discovered her disorder of mind, where imagination has usurped the dominion of reason—I was greatly affected to see the silent tear of anguish stealing down the cheek of her ami-

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able brother, while he endeavoured to sooth and prepare her for their separation — She listened with attention, but there was a wildness in her eyes that greatly alarmed us — After a few minutes silence on her part, she arose with dignity and composure in her air — Let me set you an example, my Lord, said she — I am more a *Roman* than a *Parisian* — Go, Sir, Honour calls you, obey its dictates : If you love me, signalize your courage in defence of your country ; let that love be subservient to its nobler claim — I have a present for you — Fetch the embroidered scarf, *Isabella* — Wear it, my Lord, as a pledge of my esteem ; and a continual remembrance that I interest myself

myself in your safety — Let it restrain your impetuosity; do not rashly expose yourself to unnecessary danger—Restore it to me when you have reaped those laurels that await you in the field, and expect that return which you will then be entitled to— She paused; and holding out her hand, with an air of dignity, Farewel, my Lord, added she—But why will you not endeavour to imitate my composure? We must part, let us, then, do it with the best grace we can — The Chevalier took her offered hand — Alas, my sister, how you afflict me! — Look at me, *Julia*; Do you not know your brother? — Why do you talk so wildly? — She gazed at him, with earnestness, for

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some moments ; then raising her hands and eyes, inexpressible woe overspread her late animated countenance — Gone again! — Cruel *Henrietta*! — She pulled out her handkerchief, and retired to the other end of the apartment ; when, wiping her eyes, she advanced to us again, with a melancholy air — I am resigned, brother—but remember the last request I shall ever make you — Let me be buried in the same grave : Come, *Isabella*, adorn me with my bridal ornaments—Death shall be my bridegroom—See, he stands ready to claim his victim—With a kind of terror in her looks she seemed to gaze at something, when screaming, she suddenly started and ran to her brother, as if for pro-

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protection — Save me, my *Emilius*, cried she, wildly ; that fatal dart, how narrowly I escaped it ! I hope it did not wound you — Ah, my dear sister, what shall I say to you ? — Good heavens, this is too much, I must tear myself from her : if I stay much longer, spite of duty and honour, I shall have no power to go at all ; my resolution is not sufficient for this : It is too much, repeated he, I cannot support it — She disengaged herself from his arms — Go now, my Lord, while I have power to bid you — Depend on my constancy — I will be a second *Penelope*, for that all my suitors shall not be able to shake it — She affected to smile, but it was a smile of anguish — *Isabella*,

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turning to me, Why those tears? you see how composed I am; there is no remedy, my friend; we must submit; tell them I am ready — Then looking at the Chevalier, You have heard my confession, Father, you have absolved me, what then remains but that I accomplish my vows? — Is every thing prepared? Come, Sir, lead me to the altar; see, my eyes are dry — Heaven has strengthened the victim that is going to be offered to it — Adieu, my friends, do not mourn my fate, we shall meet again in a better world — I will pray for you, and seek to procure you that resignation you so much want — For me, I am all serenity — She advanced towards the door, then

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then hastily turning back, took hold of my arm, putting her hand over her eyes — Ah, I must not see him, my resolution is staggered; leave me, my Lord, I dare not listen to you — She raised her eyes, and seeing her brother in deep affliction, ran to him — My dear *Emilius*, why did they not tell me you were come? O how I rejoice to see you; now all will be well again; you will take your poor *Julia's* part; I know you will; they have used me unkindly, but I forgive them — Let us talk of something else — Are you not well, my brother? — Why this melancholy air? (She embraced him.) You must not be so sad; speak to me — She looked at him with the most gentle sweetness —

B 5

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ness — At that instant a servant entered, and informed his master, that his horses had been in readiness some time — The Chevalier uttered a deep sigh, and taking his sister in his arms, my *Julia*, said he, in a voice that spoke his emotions, how shall I bid you adieu, how leave you in this affecting disorder of mind? Ah, restore her, gracious heaven; to thy mercy I commend my unhappy sister — He tenderly pressed her to his breast, and turning to me, I conjure you to take care of her, amiable *Isabella*; I confide in your friendship, pity the poor sufferer — Ah! what a trial is this — He forced himself from her, and precipitately left the room; — the lovely

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lovely *Julia* followed him with her eyes; she seemed lost in thought, and, uttering a deep sigh, continued some time silent; but, at last, turning to me, she approached with quickness in her motion, I have something to say to you, *Isabella* — Come this way; I would not be overheard — Now, tell me, and tell me truly, Who was it that left us just now? — She looked earnestly at me, as if waiting for an answer; but before I could speak — O, I thought so — Yes, yes, his disguise could not conceal him from me — The dear, the amiable *Sévigné* — Quick, *Isabella*, get me pen, ink, and paper, I shall soon undeceive him — She paused — I have not seen my father to-day —

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He is angry with me; let me hasten to obtain his forgiveness, and then I have no more to do in this life—Come, let us go down—Angry with you! why should you think that, my dear *Julia*? He cannot be angry with you; he loves you with the greatest tenderness. She gave not the least attention to what I said, but went and seated herself by her toilet, leaning her head on her hand—I continued talking; she made no answer, again resuming her late pensive silence, nor has she since that time once opened her lips—It is impossible to describe the affliction of her father—The physicians are doubtful, as they told me in private, if she will ever wholly be restored to the use

use of her reason, except they are allowed to take methods to effect it which they dare hardly propose to her father—The young Ladies, her sisters, are sent back to their convents, as their presence could be of no use, and her melancholy situation would too much affect their young minds—Ah, Madam, what has not the guilty *Henrietta* to answer for! But she is punished—Innocence, however afflicted, is greatly to be preferred to the torture of remorse, and severe repentance—The Marquis—Alas, what is become of that amiable, that unfortunate Nobleman! It is never yet known to what part of the world he is retired—In what distressful scenes am I continually engaged!

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gaged! — Your generous sympathy
must make you a sharer in our grief—
Adieu, Madam, may heaven restore
us to that peace, of which, however,
we see at present so little prospect.

ISABELLA.

LET

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L E T T E R XXVIII.

To LEONORA *from* ISABELLA.

REJOICE with us, Madam; heaven has heard our prayers, and will, I hope, complete the cure that is so far advanced—Our *Julia* has, for some days past—I am interrupted—The Baron desires to speak to me—It was to ask my advice in regard to the pressing solicitations of the Duke, who is importunate to be permitted to pay a short visit to his adored *Julia*—In the midst of our conversation the door opened, and, to our surprize, a little-expected guest appeared—It was no other than
that

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that lovely *Julia*, who entered with an air of composed gravity, followed by her woman, whom she immediately dismissed; and respectfully advancing to her father—Can you, said she, pardon an unhappy creature, who has so often caused you uneasiness?—My malady was, indeed, involuntary, but the cause was, perhaps, inexcusable; what is past cannot be recalled; but I now eagerly seize the first faint return of my long disordered reason to solicit your forgiveness—My dear child, cried her father, embracing her in an extasy of joy, talk not of forgiveness, you never offended me; let us praise heaven for your unexpected recovery—You are too good,
returned

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returned she, weeping — I am, indeed, I would hope, in some measure, recovered from my unhappy disorder, but it depends on you, my father, to complete it ; there is but one way to secure my returning peace—Ah then, oppose not my fixed resolution ; I have tried those pleasures that the world offer to insnare our affections—Need I say, with how little success, how little they have answered my expectations — I have loved — Alas, with how much ill-requited tenderness !—My heart, naturally but too susceptible, is now, by grief, taught to direct its feelings to a nobler object. Heaven has sanctified my sufferings ; I come forth from the furnace of affliction purified—

purified — With passions regulated, with desires aspiring to true and lasting joys — To heaven, then, I dedicate my future days. Permit me, Sir, to retire to a convent; it is there alone, I can regain my tranquillity — A few months more will complete my probation, and then, with your permission, I shall joyfully take the veil — Think not this is a hasty resolution — No, believe me, Sir, it was made the moment I heard — She sighed, and pausing, wiped her eyes, then resumed — At every interval of reason, it was the constant subject of my thoughts; no time can diminish the ardent desire I have for that way of life — What other resource
is

is now, indeed, left me? Not to mention a weakness I strive to conquer—Has not my reason been disordered; and who knows how soon that disorder may return?—Ah, then, let me fly to that blessed asylum that invites me to its calm retreat; and, while I have sense to chuse, make *that* which alone can promise me any share of contentment—Here let me live forgot, but not forgetting my father and my friends—Be it my delightful employment, to pray for their welfare and happiness, and in that way return the obligation I owe them; in that way advance the felicity of a parent, which my errors have but too often disturbed—Let

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us not damp our present joy, said the Baron, by talking on this melancholy subject; there will be time enough for that, if a resolution which, I would hope, is not quite so determined as you seem to imagine, should continue unshaken, after I have told you how unhappy, with what regret I should part with a daughter, whose misfortunes have rendered her so inexpressibly dear to me—Ah, Sir, interrupted she, do not tell me of this kind regret; I must not—indeed, my father, I must not be denied, in what is so absolutely necessary to my peace—If my wishes were gratified, it would be by an immediate preparation for my retreat. Why should I be esteemed
lost

lost to you there? I should still see my dearest father, and I am sure you would have the satisfaction of seeing me much more happy and composed than ever I shall be, till indulged in my desired solitude— You have other daughters, amiable daughters; let them supply my place; let them enjoy that fortune, which would be lost on me, who am dead to the world, and all its delusive pleasures. Heaven calls me to its self; shall I, then, resist its powerful dictates?—No, that reason which is mercifully restored to me, shall, from henceforth, be exercised in rendering myself a worthy sacrifice, dedicated to its service; that is now my sole ambition, my only desire—

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desire—Too long have I been tossed on this tempestuous ocean of life; a peaceful haven is now in view; ah, tempt me not, then, from the happy asylum that awaits me.

I am prevented from giving you the remainder of this conversation, which lasted for more than an hour, during which, all that her father, all that I could say, in opposition to her design, had not the least effect—Adieu, Madam—

Believe me yours,

ISABELLA.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXIX.

To LEONORA from ISABELLA.

THE resolution of our amiable *Julia* continues unshaken, notwithstanding all the dissuasive arguments we can use—I begin to think her father is a little more reconciled to it, since the return of his second daughter from her convent. That young lady is extremely handsome, and his affection for her daily increases—But the Chevalier, who has been informed of his sister's intention, strenuously opposes it with all the tender eloquence he is master of. He has wrote to her. Her answer
con-

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contains such weighty reasons for what she is determined on, that I fancy he will at last be obliged to acquiesce — Your letter, Madam, gave her the greatest satisfaction — I imagine, you will soon have the pleasure of hearing from her, as her mind is now composed enough for writing — The Duke is almost constantly here; his passion seems daily to increase: nothing can equal the fervor with which he pleads his cause; but you may believe she is little inclined to give a favourable ear to the suit of Love — Love, by which she has suffered so many misfortunes — I am really concerned for him, as his happiness seems to depend on the success of what he has
so

so little reason to hope for. I believe her resolution unalterable; yet nothing could discourage him in a pursuit his heart is so interested in—I could not have imagined his passion had been so violent, or so deeply rooted, considering the little encouragement he has met with—Even the fatal adventure that threw such a cloud over her reputation, could not damp it; and now that is removed, now her virtue once more shines forth in its usual lustre, his love is manifested with redoubled ardour—With all the eloquence it inspires, he remonstrates, he intreats, he argues against what he calls her cruel resolution. Large settlements are proposed, his fortune is
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offered, but she continues inflexible. He applies to her father for his interest, but has been told, that no force will be put upon her inclinations. He has wrote to the Chevalier, who is greatly his friend, and is, he knows, the most powerful advocate he could engage in his cause; but I am persuaded all his endeavours will prove ineffectual. Nothing can equal the impatience she expresses to be delivered from what she calls his tormenting persecution. She has once loved, and suffered severely for that love; but, I believe, she will never more submit to the tyranny of that passion—Ah, Madam, what do I say? Alas, does she not still suffer by its fatal influence!

influence! — The Marquis is not so easily forgot; but she does the utmost to erase his too dear image from her heart: her melancholy is not the least abated, but she suffers in silence. The Convent to which she chuses to retire, is that of * * * *, where her aunt is Abbess. It has ever been famed for its piety, but I think its rules rather too severe; that, with her, however, is rather a recommendation than an objection— She desires not, she says, to quit the world by halves, she would either be a perfect recluse, or continue as she is; nothing can equal her zeal, nothing is more animated than her devotion, in the practice of which she finds, she assures me,

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the sweetest consolation—An answer from her brother is alone wanting, to determine her irrevocable choice; since her father now more faintly opposes her resolution, her noviciate is, she says, half complete—There is no remedy, madam; we ought not to oppose the will of heaven—I have thoughts of accompanying her; I am of little consequence in the world, have tasted but few of its joys, let me then wisely endeavour to secure an interest in a better.

Adieu, Madam, yours,

ISABELLA.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXX.

To LEONORA.

H EAVEN has graciously restored my reason, the consequence of which is a renewed relish for your tender friendship—Yes, my *Leonora*, that shall last, though I conquer my less justifiable attachments. Your letters consoled me, need I then bid you continue to favour me with them. I have been unhappy; ah, who can describe how unhappy!—But a remedy is now offered for all my worldly affliction; I eagerly embrace it; religion displays its various

C 3

charms,

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charms, and kindly warns me against the allurements of a tempting world—A world, whose vain illusions are now fled. Delivered from the dominion of tumultuous passions, my long agitated mind begins to regain its wonted peace, and aspires to more exalted joys. Heaven calls me to itself; I obey the gentle summons, and, well pleased, resign the empty vanities that have too long engaged my pursuit, for those truly satisfying realities that religion offers—O let us learn to submit to the sacred will of Providence, to submit without murmuring; we know not what is for our good; how wretched should we be if our destiny depended on ourselves—

selves — My chastisements, though severe at the time, have produced the most salutary effects; nothing less could have weaned my misguided affections from a world, of which those misfortunes could alone show me the emptiness—Yes, I am now convinced, with *Solomon*, that its promised joys are vanity—O may my reason have ever thus the dominion, and regulate my passions—Do I preach, my dear *Leonora*; let us not be ashamed of doing our duty; we have too long been the slaves to prejudice and fashion—My friendship is enlarged, it is not confined to your present welfare only—Your attachment is equally sincere, be it then equally extensive; do

not, I beseech you, oppose those fixed resolves, which only can secure my best interest. I have, alas, but too many to contend with; let not my eloquent friend be of that number—My brother, ever tenderly dear to me, knows not the pain he makes me suffer, while, with well meant, but mistaken fondness, he dissuades me from what alone can secure my felicity. The Duke, too, is obstinately perverse. I am persecuted, continually persecuted by his ungovernable passion—He haunts me like my shadow, he kneels, he remonstrates, he entreats. O these men, formed to deceive; but to have been once so is sufficient—Yes, I have profited by that fatal warning;

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warning; all their arts will now prove fruitless—I know them; that is my security—To what but pride can I attribute his tormenting perseverance; he will not give up a pursuit in which his vanity makes him think he ought to succeed; those who truly love, know nothing of that selfishness so visible in him—Ah, is it possible he can feel that passion, and yet delight in giving pain to the object of it—I must change this disagreeable subject for a conversation still more so—He is below, but not his request alone, if unaccompanied by my father's, should induce me to see him—I go, then, yet shall not they alter my fixed resolves. Adieu, JULIA.

LETTER XXXI.

TO LEONORA.

YOU will not wonder at my long silence, my amiable *Leonora*, when I tell you, that my mind is hardly yet tranquil enough, after the solemn, the affecting parting from my friends and family, to write with any degree of connection; but time, and the duties of my vocation, will, I hope, at length restore that peace which has so long been a stranger to my breast — It is past, *Leonora* — Vain world, adieu! — Reason, Religion, now I follow you — To describe the moving
ing

ing scene of our parting, the grief of a tenderly beloved brother, the severe pang it cost me to tear myself from his arms, is impossible; but heaven strengthened my resolution, and now rewards me by those consolations, which only it can bestow for the sacrifice I have made—The Abbess, the Nuns of this peaceful mansion, use their kindest endeavours to render my new situation agreeable. The amiable *Isabella*, too, accompanied me here, and seems inclined to follow my example when I take the veil, which will not long be deferred: My taste for solitude daily encreases; I now engage, with pleasure and alacrity, in duties which I should once have esteemed severe

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and unsupportably burthenſome—
 Where heaven is the prize, what difficulties are too arduous to ſurmount? There is a ſatisfaction in mortification and ſelf-denial, which only thoſe who praſtiſe them can know—The Duke ſtill perſecutes me; one would think that man delighted to give pain; I could eaſily avoid ſeeing him, but that he takes care never to viſit me but in company with my brother, whoſe leave of abſence from his regiment will ſoon, however, expire, and then, though I ſhall ſeverely regret his abſence, I ſhall no longer be tormented with the fruitleſs addreſſes of his friend—This, my dear *Leonora*, is the preſent ſituation of my affairs; in leſs than a month my
 but anxiety

anxiety will be at an end, and my only remaining wish gratified, by bidding an eternal, a solemn adieu to the world — I look forward to it with impatience — Why this remaining weakness? — What pains have I not taken to conquer it? — Ah, *Sévigne*, why does thy lovely image still obtrude? — Pity me — O memory; alas! how far have I to advance ere I arrive at any degree of perfection? — You must not, my dear friend, expect many letters from me till the great event is over; my time is precious, it will require a great deal to prepare me for the solemn vows I would not rashly take; but after that, if you can patiently read my pious lectures, you may expect a regular
corre-

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correspondent in the no longer gay
Julia, but the sedate recluse—Write
 to me in the mean time, you cannot
 do it too often—Farewell, pray for
 me, and be assured of an interest in
 mine:

JULIA:

L E T:

LETTER XXXII.

To LEONORA from ISABELLA,

From the Convent de —.

WE have had a severe trial, Madam. Our friend is not yet sufficiently recovered from her emotion to give you the particulars, nor shall I attempt a minute detail, but only what is necessary to satisfy your curiosity—It happened very unfortunately to disturb her peace, when she so much stood in need of it—The very evening before she was to take the veil, every thing was prepared, but now the ceremony must be deferred a few days longer—

After

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After spending most part of the day in private, she came into my apartment, and we engaged in a conversation that animated our devotions, that confirmed our resolutions; when we were interrupted by a servant, who informed her that a person waited for her in the parlour—Your friend would have excused herself from going, but was told he came upon business of importance—She made no farther remonstrance, but, desiring me to accompany her, went down to her expecting guest—Oh, Madam, what an unlooked-for guest was that!—What was her agitation and surprize, when, on approaching the grate, she saw before her, on his knees, the greatly altered, though

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though still amiable *Sévigné*! — She shrieked, and fell senseless into my arms — How her lover was affected at that moment, you may easily imagine — Though I was too intent on recovering my friend, to give attention to any thing else, she would have retired the instant her senses returned; but he conjured her, in the most moving terms, to hear him a moment, and then he would bid her an eternal adieu — The voice of love was too powerful to be resisted; she staid — Indeed, she would hardly have had strength to have withdrawn, so violent were her emotions — In the most affecting manner he told her all the vile artifice that had been used to separate them.

This,

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This, indeed, she knew before, but it had a very different effect from his lips than those of any other—She pitied, she forgave his seeming inconstancy; she endeavoured to calm his grief, to reconcile him to their eternal separation—With the persuasive eloquence of an angel she strove to sooth him—He listened with silent woe, the tears stealing down his pale, emaciated face—She mingled her tears with his—A mournful pause ensued—He gazed at her with tenderness, mixed with despair—Soft swelling sighs were all the language he could use—but, ah! were not those sufficiently expressive of his unutterable sorrow?—Wiping her streaming eyes, again my friend renewed

newed the sadly melancholy conversation; and, by the most pious arguments, endeavoured to persuade him to a patient resignation to the will of heaven! — He then, at last, found words to speak the anguish of his heart — What moving complaints did he not utter! — His grief was the more affecting, because accompanied by a sort of mournful solemnity that testified how deeply it was rooted in his breast — He described to her the sad retreat he had chosen; a retreat, which nothing but the desire of seeing, once more, before his death, the dear object for whom alone he wished to live, could have induced him, though but for a moment, to forsake — He opposed
not

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not her resolution of taking the veil; he would himself, when at liberty to do it, follow her example, and enter into some religious order: but, should that never be the case, his life should, notwithstanding, be dedicated to solitude and unabating sorrow—She endeavoured to persuade him, that he might, by the assistance of heaven, reap the noblest advantages from it, if he would strive to conquer, instead of indulging, a fruitless sorrow—Think of me still, my Lord, as your friend, but let your no longer justifiable passion yield to a purer flame; be assured of my esteem, it will daily increase, as you grow more worthy of it; I shall continually solicit for you that
grace,

grace, which can alone raise your affection to that true source of happiness, which only can give you consolation, and restore your peace. And now, my Lord, let us struggle with our refractory hearts, and force ourselves to bid each other an eternal adieu—She arose, and advancing nearer the grate, while all her resolution could not restrain her flowing tears, held out her hand—Farewell, my Lord, added she, in a faltering voice—A last farewell—He took her hand, he pressed it to his trembling lips—Never did I see a countenance so expressive of woe—His colour changed, he attempted to speak, but his broken words were scarce intelligible—This scene
was

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was too affecting — In order to shorten it, I almost forcibly hurried my friend out of the parlour — She again fainted almost as soon as we reached her room — This prevented my return to the Marquis, whom I was in hopes to have a little consoled, before he left the Convent, but he was gone — Our afflicted *Julia* has been rather feverish, and violently low-spirited, ever since this too moving interview — She is more than ever impatient to take the veil, convinced, as she says, that the strictest vows must be added to her religious motives, ere she shall be able truly to conquer her fatal weakness — Adieu, Madam, the
solemn

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solemn ceremony is to be delayed
but two days longer—

Believe me, yours,

ISABELLA.

LET

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LETTER XXXIII.

To LEONORA.

A Short note, my friend, before I experience the awful change that awaits me. Pray for me, *Leonora*—Ah, how much do I stand in need of them! Believe me, it requires no small share of fortitude, thus in the bloom of youth, to bid the world adieu—Ah, this *Sé-vigné*!—What an unseasonable visit was his!—But the grace of heaven is all-powerful—I trust, my mind will, in a few days, be more at ease—I hardly know what I would say to you, yet I want, I think, to
ease

ease my heart of the load that oppresses it — These heavy sighs have given me some relief — Ah, why did I see — What a severe trial! Yet religion shall still gain the victory over my involuntary weakness, and tears and penitence shall expiate it —

Good heavens, *Leonora*! — But my friend will inform you of this new source of affliction — I must hasten to that dear parent — Ah, how I tremble at his danger! —

Adieu.

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ISABELLA continues.

YES, Madam, our friend has but too much cause to be afflicted; her maid is just arrived to conduct her to her father, who, by the overturning of his coach, is so dangerously hurt, that his life is despaired of—She is gone—Heaven restore him to our prayers; I can write no more—These continual disappointments of what she so ardently wishes!—But we must have patience, since we are born to suffer—

Adieu,

ISABELLA.

L E T.

LETTER XXXIV.

To LEONORA from ISABELLA.

AH, how severely ought we to
repent our repining tempers—
Providence does every thing for the
best — I have wonders to relate —
How fortunately has her taking the
vows been delayed — Admire the
hand of Heaven, which so constantly
makes our seeming evils redound, in
the end, to our greater good — I
am in extasy at the change our
friend's affairs are likely to take—
But let me try to moderate them,
while I tell you the occasion of my
joy. Hardly had she left me, when

a gentleman desired to speak to me in the parlour: Imagining it was some message from her father, I went down, filled with apprehension for the news I expected to hear — But guess what was my surprize, when I saw — no other than the Marquis, who approached me with an air that testified his rapture, and in few words told me the Marchioness was no more — To convince me more fully, he produced a letter from her, which she had wrote a few days before she expired, ordering it not to be delivered to him till after her death — To describe our mutual pleasure for this fortunate and timely event, which, if it had happened a few days later, would only have aggravated

gravated his misfortunes, is impossible—But I have no leisure to make reflections; he waits below till I give you this short account, which, in spite of his impatience to see our lovely friend, I insisted upon doing, knowing the satisfaction it would give you — Adieu; I must now attend him to the Baron — I inclose the melancholy letter, which yet has been the cause of so much joy.

Yours,

ISABELLA.

D 3 L E T

L E T T E R

To the Marquis DE SÉVIGNÉ.

“ E R E you receive this, the unfor-
 “ tunate, guilty writer will be no
 “ more—Let, then, your compassion
 “ influence you to forget her crimes—
 “ May I hope that my death will be
 “ deemed some little atonement for
 “ my faults, for faults that sprung
 “ from a too powerful passion?—Ah,
 “ my ever loved Lord, can you forgive
 “ the injury I have done you? My
 “ penitence, my incessant tears, have
 “ reached the Throne of Mercy, and
 “ heaven, in kind compassion to my
 “ sufferings, has shortened the term
 “ of my severe probation—I am sum-
 “ moned

“moned to a better world; the hand
“of death is on me; with difficulty
“I hold my pen—Do not hate my
“memory—Ah, I had much to say,
“but my strength fails—May you
“be happy; it is my earnest prayer—
“The amiable *Julia*, too; no longer
“will the unfortunate *Henrietta* op-
“pose your mutual felicity—Yes, my
“adored husband, your love, your
“constancy will now be rewarded—
“I faint, forgive and pity me—
“Farewell for ever.

HENRIETTA.”

D 4

LET

L E T T E R XXXV.

To LEONORA from ISABELLA.

WHEN will our sorrows, our repeated disappointments have an end?—Alas! what various trials is our poor unfortunate *Julia* doomed to—All our flattering hopes are vanished—We know not what is become of her—The Marquis is almost distracted—No wonder; so near as he believed himself to the accomplishment of his wishes, all his joy converted into the most poignant sorrow—With what eager impatience did he hurry to her father's—But judge of our amazement, when we found

found him in perfect health, and utterly ignorant of the report that had been spread of his danger—The servant that came to fetch her from the Convent went not by his order—Some vile plot—Who would have imagined that woman? So kind as she has ever been treated by her Lady; a woman, too, whose behaviour and education was so much above the vulgar—But there is no trusting to the fairest appearances; they too often deceive—The Duke is suspected—Ah, heavens! What have we not to fear? If she is in his power, it must be so—Enquiry has been made; he is gone to his country seat; this we learned from his domestics—The Marquis no sooner gained this

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intelligence, than he let off in pursuit of him; never, as he declares, to return, till he has found out the villain, who has thus robbed him of his greatest treasure—Her father, too, has sent every where in quest of her—Heaven knows what will be the event of all this—Had her brother been here—But it is too much that one valuable life is in danger—If it should be the Duke, who, guided by his ungovernable, unsuccessful passion, has taken such desperate measures, what mischief have we not to apprehend? And who else can it be? Nobody so strongly opposed her taking the veil. I now recollect what at the time I looked upon as no more than the effects

effects of his despair and love; but he once, in my presence, swore, that her cruelty had made him desperate; that he cared not what became of him; he would die sooner than she should take the fatal vows, and for ever destroy his hopes.—He has but too well fulfilled his rash resolves.—I cannot think he would dare to have any dishonourable design; but what does he expect from his vile stratagem? — I am convinced, she never will marry him—Perhaps, he thinks, after such an adventure, she can have no other resource, as her character must suffer; he has long been secure of her father's consent; her brother too is his friend, and ever espoused his interest; he has,

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therefore, the less to apprehend ; and, I doubt not, depends on an easily obtained pardon from them — To what purpose are all these fruitless conjectures ? — The unfortunate *Julia* — Oh, Madam, what misery must she now endure ! — Let us implore Heaven for her deliverance ; and for the safety of her amiable Lover — Adieu.

Yours,

ISABELLA

L E T

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L E T T E R XXXVI.

To LEONORA from ISABELLA.

STILL in the most dreadful suspense! We have not yet gained the least intelligence of our amiable *Julia*—The Marquis has wrote to her father; notwithstanding the most diligent search, he has still been unsuccessful—The Duke had been at his country seat, but left it early the very day in which he arrived there—The servants positively denied that any Lady accompanied him; and as positively asserted their ignorance of the place to which he was gone—The Marquis, however, is
still

still determined to continue his pursuit—Never was there such a letter; the ardent Lover is manifest in every line; nor are his despair and grief less powerfully displayed—Nothing but his, can equal the affliction and anxiety of the Baron; yet I believe, if he was certain nothing worse had happened to her than a forced marriage with the Duke, he would be a little consoled; a marriage which he has always wished for—Alas, is not this sufficiently dreadful!—But it is too common with parents to study nothing so much as the aggrandisement of their family—His Grace is but too sensible, that this is the particular foible, to give it no harsher name, of the father he has

has to deal with—It has been judged most-prudent not to inform the Chevalier of this fatal event, which is, as much as possible, concealed from every one but those who are employed in the yet fruitless search. None but the Lady Abbess is acquainted with what has happened; the nuns believe it to be illness that prevents her return to the convent; these precautions have had the desired effect; the affair is still a secret to the world—Heaven grant it may continue so—I write, Madam, because you so earnestly request it, and so feelingly describe the painful anxiety you suffer; yet to what purpose should I write, since I can give you so little consolation?—

My

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My mind is, at this time, but ill suited to this employment—You may depend on my making you a partaker of the first glimmering of hope that heaven permits us to enjoy. Adieu.

Yours,

ISABELLA.

LET

L E T T E R XXXVII.

To LEONORA from ISABELLA.

I Have this moment received a letter from the servant who assisted to betray our amiable friend—Read it, Madam—Ah, how severely am I afflicted at the situation of the lovely *Julia*—If we may believe the account this woman gives of herself, she is less guilty than we had reason to think her—But be that as it will, our poor friend has severely suffered—I will not detain you by my remarks, from satisfying a curiosity, which, I doubt not, is highly raised—Read then, Madam, and rejoice

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rejoice with me; but I will not anticipate—

The L E T T E R.

“MADAM,

“GUILTY as I must appear,
“I scarce dare write; yet, pardon
“this liberty, and be assured, the
“account I am going to give of
“my young Lady, and every other
“part of my letter, is strictly true.
“His Grace, the Duke *De Mont-*
“*pensier*, has long, as you know,
“loved Lady *Julia* with the great-
“est passion—When I had the ho-
“nour to be her attendant, before
“she went to the Monastery, I was
“often intrusted with the delivery
“of

“of his letters to her; for which
“little services he bountifully re-
“warded me, and by that means,
“I own, gave me the highest opi-
“nion of his merit and generosity,
“so that I greatly interested myself
“in the success of his passion, and,
“had it been in my power, would
“have done any thing to further
“it—You will the less wonder, Ma-
“dam, that, thus devoted to his
“service, I should, without reluct-
“ance, obey the orders he gave
“me, as I was persuaded it was
“not only for his happiness, but
“that of my young Lady; for I
“could not conceive what objections
“she could have to a Lover of his
“rank and merit, and one, too,
“whose

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“ whose interest was so warmly
“ espoused by the Baron and the
“ rest of her family. I thought she
“ made a very unjustifiable choice,
“ in preferring a Monastery to such
“ a husband, and wished his perse-
“ verance might, before it was too
“ late, induce her to change her
“ fatal resolution—Excuse this pro-
“ lixity, Madam ; but, I would en-
“ deavour, by discovering my mo-
“ tives, to excuse, in some measure,
“ the fatal mischief of which I have
“ innocently been made the instru-
“ ment—I am sure, what I did, was
“ from what I now too late find a
“ mistaken notion, that it would,
“ in the end, contribute to her fel-
“ city—But I hasten to the parti-
“ culars—

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“ culars — His Grace, a few days
“ before my young Lady had de-
“ termined on taking the veil, sent
“ for me, and did me the honour
“ to express great confidence in my
“ fidelity — My lovely *Julia*, said
“ he, is obstinately perverse, and,
“ contrary to the duty she owes her
“ father, who is as much as ever
“ averse to her becoming a Nun ;
“ in spite of my long and constant
“ passion, she persists in her fatal
“ resolution—There is but one way
“ to prevent it, continued he—An
“ innocent stratagem to get her in-
“ to my power—A little more time
“ and recollection may bring her to
“ see the misery of her choice, and
“ she will then rejoice, that it has,
“ by

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“ by any means, been prevented. I
“ have the Baron’s consent for what
“ I am going to do—He wishes for
“ nothing more than to see her
“ mine—My intentions are honoura-
“ ble—She shall be so—But since
“ all the eloquence of Love has
“ hitherto proved ineffectual, I must
“ take other measures to accomplish
“ the happiness of both—I doubt
“ not she will, in the end, be
“ grateful for so convincing a proof
“ of my passion—Her brother is my
“ friend; he knows, and approves
“ of my scheme, so does her father,
“ though none of her relations chuse
“ openly to appear in it—We must
“ invent some stratagem to get her
“ out of the Convent; I have al-
“ ready

“ ready prepared every thing for the
“ execution of my plan; you must
“ assist me—The end of our adven-
“ ture will be nothing more than a
“ private marriage at one of my
“ seats in the country; no ill con-
“ sequence can attend it—My
“ lovely *Julia* may, perhaps, be a
“ little refractory at first, but it
“ will be no difficult matter to gain
“ her pardon; all you have to
“ do, added his Grace, is im-
“ plicitly to follow my directions—
“ I have condescended to explain
“ my motive and design, that you
“ might have no scruples—Go, my
“ friend, hold yourself in readiness
“ to obey my further orders; be
“ secret—The Baron, as I before
“ said,

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“ said, is necessary to all my pro-
 “ ceedings; you have, therefore, no-
 “ thing to fear from his resent-
 “ ment — He dismissed me with a
 “ considerable present; and you know,
 “ Madam, in what manner he, by
 “ my assistance, executed his pro-
 “ ject — My young Lady, without
 “ the least suspicion, terrified at the
 “ supposed danger of her father,
 “ hastened to obey his summons—
 “ The concern she was in on that
 “ account, prevented her taking no-
 “ tice that we pursued a different
 “ way from that which led to his
 “ house—A thousand questions did
 “ she ask me, with tender sollicitude,
 “ in regard to the fatal accident—I
 “ endeavoured to amuse her atten-
 “ tion,

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“ tion, by a long and particular de-
“ tail — It succeeded for some time—
“ but wondering, at last, that we
“ were so long in performing our
“ short journey, she put her head
“ out of the carriage, fearing the
“ driver had mistaken his way—Her
“ fears were confirmed, when she
“ saw herself at the extremity of
“ *Paris*—She called to him; but you
“ may believe he did not, or, rather,
“ would not hear her — She began
“ to be alarmed; and looking sted-
“ fastly at me, What am I to think?
“ Where are we going? cried she,
“ with emotion — I could not help
“ blushing, unable to answer her
“ question — My lady, on the con-
“ trary, turned as pale as death —

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E

Speak,

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“ Speak, resumed she, trembling ;
“ Why this silence, this appearance
“ of guilt ? — It was with difficulty
“ I at last found courage to tell her
“ the particulars I have related a-
“ bove — but ere I had half finished
“ my story, overcome with terror at
“ her situation, she swooned away —
“ To describe her grief and emotions,
“ when she recovered, is impossible —
“ I was deeply affected with it ; and
“ more so, as she loaded me with
“ the severest reproaches ; yet I bore
“ them patiently, believing she would,
“ in the end, be made sensible that
“ what I had done was in order to
“ her real happiness — In a few hours
“ we reached his Grace’s seat ; the
“ carriage had drove like lightning,
“ and

“ and all prospect of escaping being
“ out of the question, my lady’s
“ grief had sunk into a sort of calm
“ despair—The Duke appeared, and
“ offered to lead her from the chaise;
“ she struggled and resisted, but he
“ lifted her out in his arms, vowing
“ that he adored her; that he meant
“ nothing but what was honourable;
“ that she should still be the mistress
“ of his fate, as well as her own—
“ She screamed; she called on hea-
“ ven for protection; but her resist-
“ ance was ineffectual; he led, or
“ rather carried her into the house—
“ On entering one of the parlours,
“ he ordered me to retire; but, with
“ a look of terror, she caught hold
“ of my hand as I was going—Stay,

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“ then, said his Grace, since your
“ lady seems to desire it : I am not
“ afraid of a witness to my con-
“ duct—She turned to him with an
“ air of disdainful indignation—Your
“ conduct, Sir — faulting through e-
“ motion — but I will endeavour to
“ be calm — She raised her eyes to
“ heaven, tears streaming down her
“ face ; then suddenly casting herself
“ at his feet — Hear me, Sir, while I
“ have power to speak — Pity me,
“ restore me to my friends ! — See, I
“ condescend to kneel to you—O let
“ me not owe my wretchedness to
“ you, to the man who has so often
“ vowed he loved me ! — As thus I
“ do again, cried he, with fervour,
“ bending down to the same posture—
“ By

“ By all that is good and sacred, I
“ do, and ever must adore you—He
“ seized her struggling hand, and
“ pressed it to his lips — She arose —
“ Tell me, Sir, (with a resolute air,)
“ for what am I reserved? — Why
“ have you brought me here? — Let
“ me not vainly sue to one who is
“ so apparently lost to all the feelings
“ of honour and humanity — Ah,
“ how unjustly you reproach me,
“ cried his Grace, but you shall
“ find I am insensible to neither; my
“ only wish is to make you honour-
“ ably mine — Your cruel resolution
“ obliged me to take those desperate
“ measures — Forgive me, O most
“ lovely, and most beloved! — You
“ ask my pity — but how can you ex-

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“pect what you so often have denied
 “me — I who really merit it — But
 “what do I desire of you, Madam,
 “that you have reason to refuse? —
 “Is it offering you any indignity,
 “thus kneeling, to intreat you to
 “become my bride; to become the
 “mistress of my rank and fortune;
 “the sole dispenser of my joy, my
 “happiness? — Rise, Sir, said she,
 “repeated trials have taught me how
 “to suffer: complaints are fruitless,
 “and as little will, I fear, avail my
 “just reproaches — Yet flatter not
 “yourself that from this seeming
 “calmness I should ever be brought
 “to comply with your design — No,
 “Sir, I tell you (and you have reason
 “to know I am not apt to make
 “rash,

“ rash, nor, when they are once made,
“ easily break my resolutions) that
“ I never will consent to be your’s—
“ You once, Sir, professed to set
“ some value on my esteem; would
“ you regain it, restore me to my
“ friends, and depend on my warmest
“ gratitude—You do not easily break
“ your resolutions, my adorable *Julia*;
“ in that we resemble each other—
“ By heaven I swear you must and
“ shall be mine—Nay, more, I will
“ love you with such fervour, such
“ unabating constancy, that you shall
“ not be able to refuse me a return—
“ When our marriage is consumma-
“ ted—Nay, do not frown, my an-
“ gel, for it must be so—then will I
“ restore you to your friends as my

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“ lovely, my adorable bride — But
“ never till then — Not all the united
“ force of men and devils shall tear
“ you from me, till my resolution
“ is accomplished — Then Heaven
“ have mercy upon me, cried she,
“ raising her streaming eyes ; yet,
“ hear me, Sir — Interrupting her —
“ No, I must not, cannot hear, my
“ angel ; it pains me to refuse, and
“ yet I never will comply with your
“ request — Ah, rather let me speak,
“ and deign to hear me with less
“ mortifying scorn, while, with all
“ the eloquence that a passion, fer-
“ vent as mine, inspires, I plead my
“ cause — He stopped, observing a
“ deadly paleness overspread her coun-
“ tenance ; her spirits now deserted
“ her,

“her, and she fell senseless into a
“chair—He flew to her assistance;
“never did I see such tender anxiety
“as appeared in all his actions—
“He certainly loves her to distraction—
“Still senseless, she was carried to her
“apartment, where, placing her on a bed, he
“reluctantly retired, having first earnestly
“recommended her to the care of
“me, and some other female attendants;
“I was so much affected with the scene
“I had been witness to, that I now began
“to repent my having any share in the
“adventure—On her giving signs of recovery,
“I dismissed the other women, and, falling
“on my knees, implored her pardon—promising,

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“ for the future, to be wholly de-
“ voted to her service—Believe me,
“ Madam, I was sincere — I even
“ proposed our escape, if she could
“ think of any means to effect it,
“ assuring her of my readiness to
“ assist her—Nay, I offered myself
“ to concert those means — It was
“ long before she could rely on my
“ professions—But, by frequent and
“ earnest protestations of my readi-
“ ness to make all the atonement in
“ my power, for the crime which I
“ had, not from bad motives, com-
“ mitted, she at last begun to put
“ some confidence in me—It was no
“ wonder, that, in her situation, she
“ should endeavour to believe me,
“ since trusting to my fidelity might
“ do

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“do her service, but could not, at
“that time, injure her — She ap-
“peared then a little [consoled, at
“the promise I made of endeavour-
“ing our escape, which yet we
“could see no probable means of
“effecting—Our only hope was from
“the unlimited confidence his Grace
“placed in me, as he believed he
“had effectually secured me in his
“interest — In reality, I sincerely
“pitied him, and would have done
“any thing he commanded that did
“not interfere with the peace and
“happiness of my young Lady —
“I little thought she had so fixed
“an aversion to him, or I should
“never have engaged in an enter-
“prize which I now so sincerely

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“condemn — This morning very
“early the Duke sent for me, and
“tenderly enquiring after my Lady,
“bad me, if her health would per-
“mit, prepare her, as well as I
“could, to pursue our journey, for
“that he did not think he could so
“easily effect his design in his own
“house ; though there was, indeed,
“but little fear of interruption from
“her friends, yet he should defer it
“till he had removed to a greater
“distance from *Paris* — He dis-
“missed me—I obeyed his orders—
“My Lady made no resistance,
“knowing it would be ineffectual—
“She went, indeed, with fewer ap-
“prehensions, flattering herself, that,
“by my assistance, she might pos-
“sibly

“sibly escape the snare that was laid
“for her — His Grace would have
“taken my place in the chaise, but
“she strenuously opposed it — He
“made a merit of his painful com-
“pliance — I then had the honour
“to be her companion — You may
“believe, Madam, our intended
“escape, and a thousand projects to
“effect it, was the only conversation
“in which we engaged during our
“journey — At the end of it, we
“were set down at a large house,
“of a genteel appearance; but in
“what part of the world it is, we
“are still ignorant — A young Gen-
“tleman came out, and with a
“graceful politeness welcomed the
“Duke; who, after a slight com-
“pliment,

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“pliment, hurried to his mistress,
“offered his hand, which her
“weakness obliged her to accept—
“An elegant entertainment was
“prepared for her; of which, you
“may, however, believe, she had but
“little inclination to partake—At
“her request I was suffered to be
“present—A great deal of conver-
“sation passed between his Grace
“and the young Gentleman, whose
“name he cautiously avoided to men-
“tion — The Duke endeavoured to
“vindicate his conduct with regard
“to my Lady, pleading the violence
“of his passion; which, added to
“the rigour with which she had
“ever treated him, had forced him
“to engage in the desperate enter-
“prize—

“ prize—The other affected to con-
“ demn force, and urged him to
“ wait patiently for the Lady’s con-
“ sent to his happiness, though he
“ believed it necessary to keep her
“ still in his power, till, by repeated
“ proofs of his passion, he had sof-
“ tened her into a return—He
“ looked frequently at my Lady
“ with eyes that spoke his admira-
“ tion—Her sighs and tears seemed
“ deeply to affect him—Pleased with
“ those symptoms, she thought it
“ was not impossible, but that she
“ might, in him, find that friend
“ she stood so much in need of—
“ She, therefore, in the most elo-
“ quently moving manner, implored
“ his protection—He, with an ap-
“ pearance

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“pearance of sincerity, assured her
“of it, protesting, that nothing but
“what was strictly honourable should
“be offered to her under his roof;
“yet, he must venture to tell her,
“that he would rather further than
“oppose the happiness of his friend,
“and, like him, would use his endea-
“vours to conquer, what he could not
“but think, her unreasonable preju-
“dice; force, however, should, never
“with his consent, be made use
“of—She might look on his house
“as an asylum from that—But in re-
“turn, he wished her to consider the
“merit of her lover—his rank, his
“fortune, and not obstinately perse-
“vere in opposing both her own
“and his happiness—He then launch-

“ed.

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“ed out into his praise, but deli-
“cately enough not to shock the
“modesty of his friend—That friend,
“in turn, pleaded his cause with no
“less eloquence—He knelt, he sued,
“he even wept—But nothing could
“move the obdurate heart of my Lady,
“who heard him with silent scorn,
“and took the first opportunity to
“retire—I soon after received a
“summons from his Grace—I found
“him in company of the other
“Gentleman, who soon threw off the
“honourable mask he had assumed—
“I was given to understand, the
“marriage would be delayed no
“longer than next morning—An
“Ecclesiastic, the Gentleman’s Con-
“fessor, who lived in the house
“with

“ with him, was then to tie the
“ indissoluble knot—The good man’s
“ scruples had been effectually re-
“ moved, by some never-failing ar-
“ guments—In short, every thing
“ would be in readiness by ten next
“ morning, for the fatal ceremony—
“ Trembling at this intelligence, I
“ returned to my Lady, whom I
“ faultingly acquainted with the
“ dreadful news—I could hardly
“ prevent her fainting with terror—
“ But I revived her drooping spirits
“ with the hopes of escaping that
“ night—We had no time to lose—
“ We concerted our measures, there-
“ fore, with all imaginable expedi-
“ tion—After the family were in
“ bed, it was determined to put
“ them

“ them in practice— With anxious
“ impatience we waited for that
“ time— It came at last— We de-
“ scended with all imaginable pre-
“ caution to the door, but to our
“ infinite disappointment, found it
“ locked, and the key taken out;
“ so were all the lower apartments—
“ Almost in despair, we again as-
“ cended to our apartments, the
“ windows of which look into a
“ large garden; they are not at any
“ great distance from the ground,
“ nor did we find much difficulty,
“ by the assistance of some cords
“ that I had procured, in case we
“ were reduced to the necessity of
“ using them, to descend— Those
“ useful cords I had luckily met
“ with

“ with round some of the servants
“ baggage — We got down then,
“ without any danger, into the gar-
“ den — His Grace’s confidence in
“ my fidelity, made him not take
“ all the precautions that might have
“ been expected — So far we succeed-
“ ed to our wish ; but how to get
“ out of this garden, was the next
“ difficulty — The night was very
“ dark ; we were greatly alarmed,
“ lest, though so far advanced, we
“ should not yet be able to ac-
“ complish our design — But Hea-
“ ven took pity on my poor La-
“ dy, whose spirits now began to
“ fail her — Chance, at last, di-
“ rected us to a little gate which
“ opened into a park ; it was only
“ bolted

“ bolted on the inside — With joy-
“ ful haste we went out, and pur-
“ sued our uncertain way. After wan-
“ dering a great while, we at last
“ found ourselves in a road; we
“ kept on in it, though uncertain
“ where it would lead us to — The
“ break of day now enabled us to
“ pursue our journey with more ex-
“ pedition — I could not have be-
“ lieved Lady *Julia*, delicately form-
“ ed as she is, could have endured
“ so much fatigue; but fear gave her
“ wings; I could hardly keep pace
“ with her — We walked on without
“ ever resting, till her watch inform-
“ ed us it was near five o’clock in
“ the morning; but I began now
“ to fear we should not be able to
“ proceed

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“ proceed much farther ; my Lady
“ was quite faint and out of breath,
“ when we fortunately discovered a
“ little hut, which, on enquiry, we
“ found belonged to the man who
“ keeps the turnpike — We joyfully
“ made use of this asylum, where
“ he civilly permitted us to rest our-
“ selves ; in the mean time, we de-
“ sired him to watch and inform us
“ of the first carriage that passed—
“ He punctually followed our or-
“ ders, and in little more than an
“ hour an empty chaise made its ap-
“ pearance — My Lady liberally re-
“ warded our kind host, and, getting
“ into the carriage, desired the lad
“ to proceed with all expedition to
“ to *Paris* — That, he told us, was
“ not

“ not in his power, as he had orders
“ from his master to go to * * * ; but
“ if we chose it, he would set us down
“ at that village. As there was no
“ remedy, he was bid to drive on,
“ and that with all possible haste—
“ In short, Madam, we are now
“ safe at *B.* in the house of a pea-
“ sant, who has undertaken to carry
“ this letter to the post, at some
“ little distance—My Lady would
“ have wrote herself, but I intreat-
“ ed her rather to rest herself after
“ her great fatigue both of mind
“ and body—You will please to in-
“ form the Baron where she is, but
“ at the same time let him know,
“ that she does not propose waiting
“ for his coming here ; a carriage is
“ already

“ already sent for; we hope it will
 “ not be long before it arrives—My
 “ advice, however, is, that my Lady
 “ should rest herself a day or two
 “ in this place, where, I apprehend,
 “ there is little fear of her being
 “ discovered; she will then be better
 “ able to bear the fatigue of a
 “ journey—Let me now intreat you,
 “ Madam, not to judge too hardly
 “ of me for my late faulty conduct,
 “ since I have made all the repara-
 “ tion in my power — Pardon me;
 “ my Lady has set you the generous
 “ example.

“ I am, Madam, with respect,

“ Your most obedient,

“ humble servant,

“ A. MARTIGNY.”

Need

Need I bid you rejoice with me in her providential delivery — Ah, with what eagerness do I long once more to see our long-suffering friend — The Marquis, too — Thank heaven, all will yet be well — Yes, Madam, their misfortunes are at an end ; I see the approach of their perfect felicity — The Baron is informed of her escape — He is inexpressibly happy, and now preparing to go to B —, that he may have the pleasure of conducting her home — Perhaps she may have begun her journey before he arrives — He will, however, most likely, meet them on the road. B — is about thirty miles

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from *Paris*—Adieu, I am summoned;
he is just going to set out.

Yours,

ISABELLA

LET

L E T T E R XXXVIII.

To LEONORA from ISABELLA.

WHAT can be the meaning of this?—All my dreadful fears revive!—The Baron is returned; and returned, alas, without our *Julia*!—She set off, as the people informed him, the day before he arrived—True, he might miss her on the road; but why then is she not here as soon, or rather sooner, than her father, since she set out before him?—Yet, I would still endeavour to hope; her carriage might meet with some accident; she might be taken ill, and so be incapable of

continuing her journey — Alarming as this thought is, it is still better than to suppose her again in the power — Good heaven, I dare not think of that — But why does not her maid write, to inform us of their delay? — O, this painful suspense! — The Baron has sent his people different ways, in order to learn tidings of her — There are two roads that lead to B—, perhaps she has taken the contrary one to that by which he went; they are to enquire at every inn between *Paris* and that place; surely we cannot be long before we are delivered from this dreadful uncertainty — What is become of the Marquis all this while! — Should he
meet

meet with the Duke, heaven knows what may be the consequence— Again I am tormenting both you and myself—Why did I not wait till I could send you a more favourable account? But your repeated requests, the anxiety you express, induced me to write, though I can give so little consolation; we have yet, however, no reason to despair—Some glimmering of hope is still left—Oh, were it not for that, this miserable life would be insupportable—Adieu, Madam, believe me

Yours,

ISABELLA.

L E T T E R XXXIX.

To LEONORA from ISABELLA.

WHY do you so earnestly desire me to write? What can I say to you?—Alas, Madam, it is now near a month, and not the least intelligence of our friend—All our enquiries have been fruitless—The Duke is no where to be found, any more than our *Julia*; the Marquis has been with us—He is in despair—Ah! a letter is just brought me, I dread to open it—I tremble with apprehension! The most dreadful forebodings!—Heaven grant they may be without foundation.

Ah,

Ah, Madam, all is over—Read, and with me lament her hapless fate—The poor Marquis; my tears blind me, I cannot write; the inclosed letter will account for my inexpressible grief.

The L E T T E R.

“MADAM,

“I KNOW not how to begin the
“melancholy account I have to send
“you—Wretch that I am—Ah, I
“shall never forgive myself for the
“hand I have had in this fatal ad-
“venture—My poor Lady is dan-
“gerously ill; but no wonder—The
“Duke is inconsolable; never man
“adored a woman as he does her—

F 4

“Why,

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“ Why, alas, was not his love less
“ violent?—But let me try, with-
“ out further preamble, to give you
“ an account of what has hap-
“ pened.

“ Impatient to return to *Paris*,
“ though still greatly fatigued with
“ her late journey, my Lady took
“ the first carriage that could be
“ procured to convey her to that
“ place—Ah, with what joy did she
“ look forward to the prospect of
“ seeing her father and her friends!—
“ But heaven had yet greater mis-
“ fortunes in reserve for her—We
“ drove at a great rate, and the
“ postillion, too inattentive, over-
“ turned the chaise; we received,
“ how-

“however, no other damage than
“a severe fright—My Lady fainted,
“and we were obliged to have
“her carried to the next inn—Un-
“fortunate precaution!—Yet it was
“certainly necessary in her condi-
“tion—Ah, Madam, the first per-
“son that struck my sight was one
“of the Duke’s valets—I trem-
“bled with apprehension, and not
“without cause; it was not long be-
“fore his master made his appear-
“ance—He darted at me a look of
“rage and reproach; but my Lady
“engaged his principal attention,
“and saved me for a time from
“his anger—With infinite tender-
“ness he assisted to recover her—
“But scarcely did she give signs

“ of returning life, when, in spite
“ of my remonstrances, and though
“ I besought the people of the
“ house to save us from his vio-
“ lence, he hurried her into his
“ chaise, which he had ordered to
“ the door—The unfeeling creatures,
“ awed by his rank, regarded not
“ what I said, but tamely saw her
“ carried off, without making the
“ least resistance—What else was to
“ be expected from such mercenary
“ wretches?—His servants were or-
“ dered to take care of me, which
“ they did, by forcing me into an-
“ other chaise, the man I first men-
“ tioned seating himself by me—In
“ this manner we returned to the
“ hated house we had so lately pro-
“ videntially

“ videntially escaped from—I was
“ not suffered to see or attend my
“ Lady, nor did I know any thing
“ of her sufferings, but from what
“ I could but too easily imagine;
“ from her dreadful situation—For
“ two days I was closely confined
“ to my apartment — A thousand
“ times I entreated—I begged to
“ be admitted to my Lady, but was
“ constantly refused—I asked as often
“ after her health; to these enquiries
“ I was seldom indulged with an
“ answer; sometimes, indeed, they
“ deigned to tell me she was better
“ than on her first arrival—On the
“ third morning I was conducted to
“ her apartment—Ah, Madam, what
“ a scene presented itself!—She was

“surrounded by his Grace, the
 “young Gentleman to whom the
 “house belongs, and the vile — (I
 “must call him so) — Ecclesiastic —
 “They had just recovered her from
 “a swoon; yet still a death-like
 “paleness overspread her amiable
 “countenance. Hardly were her
 “senses perfectly restored, when the
 “Priest was desired to begin the
 “ceremony — In vain were all her
 “tears and intreaties — The insen-
 “sible wretch went on in reading
 “the solemn service — Your friend,
 “then, uttering a deep sigh, and
 “raising her streaming eyes to Hea-
 “ven, sunk on her knees, with a
 “look of unutterable woe — It is
 “thy will, said she, in a faltering
 “accent,

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“ accént, O Power Divine, and
“ clasping her hands, behold me,
“ then, submissive to that will, a
“ patient victim to thy hard de-
“ cree—Then bursting into tears of
“ anguish, she fell almost senseless
“ on the floor — The Duke ran to
“ support her — She struggled no
“ longer — Her strength and spirits
“ seemed quite exhausted — Stupified
“ with grief, she appeared insensible
“ to every thing they did, nor made
“ the least resistance, when taking
“ her hand he fixed on her finger
“ the fatal ring — For several hours
“ after she continued in silent me-
“ lancholy — Her tears no longer
“ flowed ; she did not even sigh, or
“ utter the least complaint — The
“ Duke,

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“ Duke, after pressing the fair statue
“ to his breast, seated her in a
“ chair — She continued immove-
“ able—I shall never forget the af-
“ fecting scene, nor the sadly com-
“ posed air of her expressive counte-
“ nance—His Grace appeared deeply
“ afflicted—He knelt, he talked to
“ her in the tenderest manner; he
“ implored her forgiveness, for what
“ his love had compelled him to;
“ swore that from henceforth she
“ should be absolute mistress of his
“ fate; he would know no will but
“ her’s—Ah, my *Julia*, look at me;
“ Why this cruel silence? Have I,
“ then, sinned beyond the hope of
“ pardon?—What have I done?—
“ Speak to me, my life, my only
“ love—

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“ love—I will write to your father;
“ he will compassionate the violence
“ of my passion—I will now restore
“ him his charming daughter; he
“ will not be offended that I have
“ thus made her my bride—Your
“ brother, too, my amiable friend—
“ Let us no longer think on what
“ is past; but look forward to
“ those scenes of joy that await us—
“ I glory in my wife. Why, alas!
“ is a passion like mine deemed so
“ unworthy of a return—The world
“ allows me some share of merit;
“ but what is its favour, if I am
“ hated by her whom I alone wish
“ to please?—In this manner ran he
“ on—But received no answer from
“ his Lady—Repeatedly he pressed
“ her

“ her almost lifeless hand to his
 “ lips; she made not the least re-
 “ sistance — At last, however, she
 “ awoke from her insensibility, and
 “ struggling to withdraw her hand,
 “ which he still held between his —
 “ looked at him with a kind of
 “ horror — She attempted to speak,
 “ but the violence of her emotion
 “ choked her voice — A burst of
 “ tears a little relieved her — His
 “ Grace continued kneeling; she
 “ arose with an air of dignity —
 “ Are you satisfied, Sir; or have
 “ you yet more misery in reserve
 “ for the unhappy creature who is
 “ thus delivered into your cruel
 “ power? — You will not long be
 “ able to tyrannize — Be speedy, then,
 “ for

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“ for death will soon release me—
“ Again he renewed his professions
“ of love, his entreaties for pardon.
“ The Priest was still in the apart-
“ ment — Without deigning a reply
“ to her supplicating Lover, she
“ turned to him — Your habit, said
“ she, intitles you to respect —
“ Would I could say as much for
“ your actions—But tell me, Sir, are
“ you really what you appear?—I
“ do not mean to ask if your sanc-
“ tity corresponds with your sa-
“ cred profession?—Your conduct too
“ plainly proves the contrary — But
“ are you really a Priest? though a
“ disgrace to that order; yet I shall
“ hardly dare to rely on your
“ word — But, if you are, indeed,
“ one,

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“one, tell me, Does this forced
“this hated marriage, bind? Speak;
“Sir — It does, Madam, answered
“the man, in some confusion, awed
“by the dignity of her manner—
“I will excuse your unjust reproaches,
“in consideration of your present
“resentment; I hope you will one
“day be brought to a sense of
“your crime, in treating thus dis-
“respectfully a man of my order—
“Your behaviour is, doubtless,
“highly displeasing to Heaven; this
“marriage, to which you have
“made such unwarrantable resist-
“ance, is authorized by the con-
“sent of your father. You acted
“contrary to duty, while you per-
“versely sought to embrace a way
“of

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“ of life repugnant to his inclina-
“ tion, and that more from despair
“ than a sufficient vocation — You
“ was ordained to become the wife
“ this Nobleman — Repent, then, for
“ having so long opposed the decree
“ of Heaven — that fixed decree,
“ which all our resistance cannot
“ render ineffectual — It is fit you
“ should humble yourself for a
“ crime, that only a sincere peni-
“ tence can atone for; and submit,
“ like a good Christian, to the fate
“ allotted you — We are not to be
“ our own carvers — It is well for
“ us, that liberty is denied us —
“ Whatever is, is best — Even when
“ we are visited, with what we deem
“ misfortunes, (for whom the Lord
“ loveth,

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“loveth, he chasteneth)—But you,
“Madam, if not blinded by obsti-
“nacy and perverseness, ought to
“rejoice in becoming the wife of
“one, who is so every way worthy
“of you—Happiness is now in your
“power; you have none but your-
“self to blame, if you wilfully op-
“pose your own felicity; remember,
“you have been engaged in a most
“awful ceremony; you are now,
“by the laws of God and Man,
“become the wife of that Gentle-
“man; learn then to respect him
“as such, and pay him that love
“and obedience you have so so-
“lemnly vowed—I vowed! inter-
“rupted my Lady, with indigna-
“tion—Yes, Madam, you was si-
“lent

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“lent when the solemn commands
“were pronounced, that is sufficient
“to render them binding — Come,
“added he, offering to take her
“hand, let me once more present
“you to your husband — Let me
“once more give you my pious be-
“nediction—Not that it is needful,
“but I wish to see you more sen-
“sible of your duty—Mine, I have
“now discharged—Ah, thou mercy-
“ful Power, cried my Lady, weep-
“ing, teach me that fortitude I
“so much stand in need of, do
“with me what seemeth best in thy
“sight — But since I am bound to
“suffer, endue me with that resig-
“nation which becomes thy depend-
“ant creature—Ah, in pity, shorten
“the

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“ the term of my severe probation—
“ She sat down, her handkerchief at
“ her eyes, and continued weeping—
“ The Duke again approached, en-
“ deavouring, with all the tender
“ eloquence he was master of, to
“ soothe her into composure—She was
“ silent for some time—At length,
“ looking at him with an air of
“ melancholy despair, you will be
“ satisfied, Sir—I feel I cannot long
“ survive this cruel treatment—She
“ sighed, an increasing paleness over-
“ spread her lovely face, reclining
“ back in her chair, she lost for a
“ while the sense of her woe—A
“ thousand remedies were applied to
“ recall her to life, but without
“ effect—She was carried, still in-
“ sensible,

“ sensible, to her apartment — I
“ was so affected with her condi-
“ tion, that I had no longer power
“ to offer her any assistance—They
“ therefore removed me into another
“ room—When I had a little re-
“ covered my spirits I sat down to
“ write—I have been above a week,
“ at different times, employed in giv-
“ ing you this melancholy account,
“ which yet I know not when I
“ shall be permitted to send you—
“ But the affair must soon be made
“ public — The Duke proposes writ-
“ ing to the Baron—I shall take
“ that opportunity for dispatching
“ this—Ah, Madam, how can I
“ hope for forgiveness—Alas, what
“ is past cannot be recalled, and,
“ believe,

"believe me, I am truly penitent.

"I shall not seal my letter till I

"have an opportunity to send it;

"perhaps I shall have something

"more to add.

"M A D A M,

"THE Duke has at last wrote

"to the Baron; his letter goes in a

"few hours; but before I send

"mine, I think it necessary to in-

"form you, that my Lady is rather

"better, though still extremely me-

"lancholy, as you may well ima-

"gine—We are, to-morrow morn-

"ing, if her health will permit, to

"remove to one of his Grace's coun-

"try seats, at no great distance from

"Paris. Nothing can equal the pa-

"tient

“tient resignation of his charming
“Duchess—She submits to her hard
“fate, for which there is, alas, no
“remedy, with the most amiable
“fortitude; nay, she even struggles
“to perform her duty to the Duke,
“since assured she must regard him
“as her husband—He is in raptures
“at her condescension, and is not
“without hopes that his love will
“at length conquer her indifference—
“But ah, Madam, he knows not
“how deeply grief is rooted in her
“heart—I have leisure for no more,
“but to subscribe myself,

“Madam,

“Your most obedient servant,

“A. MARTIGNY.”

L E T T E R XL.

To the Baron DE VALLIERE.

YOU once deemed me worthy to become your son; depending on your unretracted consent, I now venture to address you as such—Some unfortunate circumstances attended my marriage with your adorable daughter; but permit me to plead in my defence the violence of my passion, which, I now hope, will meet with a return, and, I trust, will constitute my *Julia's* happiness, as well as my own—Pardon me, Sir, the almost involuntary uneasiness I have caused you. Let us forget

get what is past; my future days shall testify the sincerity of my respectful esteem for you, as well as my unbounded love for my angel bride — I would, in person, have solicited your pardon; I own, some parts of my conduct are hardly to be justified; yet there was an almost absolute necessity for what I have done — But for my innocent stratagem, I should, at this moment, instead of the most happy, have been the most wretched of mankind, deprived for ever of the only joy this world could give — My lovely *Julia* is not yet sufficiently recovered from the — I would hope, unjust alarm, I was so unfortunate as to be the cause of, to undertake a journey to *Paris*,

though she impatiently longs for the happiness of seeing you — We shall, by the time you receive this, be at our country seat at * * * *, where no guest could be so welcome to us both, as that father whom we so perfectly esteem — I would joyfully save you the trouble of coming, and, as my duty requires, first pay my respects to you; but I cannot think of leaving my *Julia* till I have the happiness of seeing her better—I shall write to my amiable friend, your son, whom I am, now, with infinite satisfaction, permitted to call brother. — All my angel's relations have the highest claim to my affections—I live but to make her happy, to gratify her
every

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every wish. Heaven, who knows the fervour of my affection, will, I hope, ere long, soften her gentle heart to a return — Till then my felicity is incomplete — Permit me to transcribe myself,

Dear Sir,

Your respectful humble servant,

DE MONTPENSIER,

G 3 L E T

L E T T E R XLI.

To LEONORA from ISABELLA.

WE have been some days at
 * * * *. It is impossible
 to describe the affecting settled melancholy of the most unhappy Duchess that ever was graced with that title — Yet with what un murmuring resignation does she submit to her fate — The Duke, by the most passionate tender assiduity, strives to inspire her with some share of that violent love, with which he adores his sadly disconsolate bride — Her father and lovely sister are with us — A pardon was, as I foresaw, easily
 obtained

obtained by his noble son — They propose making some stay, in hopes their presence will a little console the unfortunate *Julia* — I would have retired to the convent, in which I mean to end my days ; but, desirous as I am of being fixed in that peaceful asylum, one word from my friend, one wish that I should continue with her, made me instantly relinquish my design, till I see her restored to some degree of happiness — Ah, Madam, what will be the anguish of the despairing Marquis, when informed that all his late sanguine hopes are for ever blasted — I tremble for the effects it may produce — Alas ! what a world of misery and disappointment do we

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live in !—The castle has, for some time past, been crowded with congratulatory visitors ; the world suspects not that it was a forced, but only by mutual consent, a private marriage—Yet the melancholy of the fair bride might convince them, that duty, at least, had a greater share in her compliance than love—The Duke makes it his constant study to procure amusements, in which, however, his most earnest intreaties cannot prevail on his Lady to partake—Ah, Madam, how can he expect she should—Every moment her regard to her father will permit her to be absent, she spends with me, shut up in her apartment, where I mix my tears with hers. Little conversation passes

ses between us; she cares not to speak — Deep sighs are now almost the only language she makes use of — Yet, she seems to taste a kind of sadly pleasing satisfaction, in thus indulging her silent woe — She has never yet mentioned the Marquis, nor shall I, as long as it can be avoided, either talk of him, or inform her of his Lady's death — Let us not add to her already too deeply rooted sorrow, by shewing her how near she was to happiness — Within these two or three days, she endeavours to read when we are alone together; you may believe, none but books of piety are her study; but, even those, her flowing, her incessant tears, will not

permit her to profit by — I cannot see, said she, this morning — Ah, read to me, *Isabella*; let the pious precepts of Christianity, the blessings it promises, soften my tortured mind, may they teach me a more becoming resignation to the will of Heaven; I condemn my too great impatience — But, alas, what have I not endured! — Yet, since it is my fate, I will endeavour to submit with patience; this life is short, so I am often told — Ah, it may be so; yet, surely I at least, have found in it a long, long time of suffering — In this manner we generally spend our hours of solitude — Increasing resignation sheds a kind of sadly sober content over her mind —

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mind—Bidding adieu to the delusive pursuit of pleasure in this life, she waits patiently, with lively hopes, for that happiness, which, as a recompense for her present misery, awaits her in those blessed regions, where sorrow is no more, and every tear is wiped from every eye—Adieu, Madam, I am just informed the Baron leaves us to-morrow—Business of consequence demands his presence in *Paris*—Her charming sister, for so in reality she is, though of a turn rather too lively to be agreeable to my taste, stays with the Duchess, but does not shew an amiable sympathy for our friend's affliction—Indeed, she little resembles our *Julia* in that tender sensibility,

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for which she is so justly esteem-
ed—The young *Sophia* is gay, al-
most to levity; but ought not her
youth to plead her excuse?—Once
more adieu—

ISABELLA.

LET

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LETTER XLII.

To LEONORA *from* ISABELLA.

OUR fair friend is more than usually melancholy to-day. Parting with her father, is in some measure the cause; yet not the whole—She tells me, an uncommon depression weighs down her heart, an added dejection of spirits, which seems to forbode some new misfortune—Yet, alas, continued she, what have I now to fear; the measure of my woe is already full, nor will admit increase—The Duke has been proposing her return to *Paris*, as winter is beginning to rob the country

try of its charms, but her Grace strenuously opposes it, declaring her fixed resolution to end her days in privacy and retirement; yet, added she, sighing, why do I talk of resolution, when in the power of him who has ever known how to make me obey—Unkind reproacher, cried he, with a tender air, have I had any will but your's, ever since I had the happiness to call you mine? Ah, is the effect of a too ungovernable passion never to be forgot? A passion, whose very violence ought to excite a return; Who ever loved like me?—O, my *Julia*, continued he, tenderly pressing her hand, must I then despair, in spite of all my efforts to move that flinty heart of thine,

thine, which I would die to possess—I wish, my dear Madam, you would use your influence to persuade her not to manifest so openly her too lively resentment; the consequence of her settled hate, may, in the end, prove the means of alienating his affections; the most violent passions are generally of the shortest duration, and since he is her husband, it is necessary for her peace that she should endeavour to treat him as such — Good heavens, Madam, my friend is suddenly taken ill! Violent fits; she is now in one, from which they despair of recovering her.

Continua]

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Continuation.

I NO longer wonder at her illness—What else could be expected, after receiving such a letter?—Read it, Madam; I must hasten to my friend, whose anguish is not to be described: the Duke, however, is happily ignorant of the cause of this new affliction; nothing can equal his tender sollicitude.

Adieu,

ISABELLA.

The

The L E T T E R.

“ O most lovely, and most be-
“ loved of women, what have you
“ done!—Did my almost involuntary
“ fault deserve so severe a punish-
“ ment? Yet, why do I complain?
“ Born to be wretched, I must sub-
“ mit to my fate—But, ah, my
“ once tender *Julia*, is it just I
“ should owe my misery to you!—
“ How have I thus deserved your
“ hate? Why did you, with well dis-
“ sembled pity, sooth my grief, only
“ to wound me deeper?—When
“ every obstacle was removed, thus
“ cruelly to drive me, by your fatal
“ marriage,

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“ marriage, to despair—When I was
 “ free to offer you that heart which
 “ never knew another love, you
 “ dashed at once my too aspiring
 “ hopes, and plunged me into never
 “ ending woe — But I will not —
 “ Alas, what right have I to re-
 “ proach you? — No, most amiable
 “ of women, if you are happy, if
 “ you still approve your worthier
 “ choice, the wretched *Sévigné* will
 “ no longer complain of his *Julia*—
 “ His, did I say?—O, exquisite mi-
 “ fery!—No, she never can be his;
 “ that dear enchanting hope is fled
 “ for ever — Yet still I can, with
 “ mournful pleasure, reflect, she is
 “ now blessed in being—Ah, I
 “ dare not think on what she is,
 “ or

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“ or I shall grow distracted—Why,
“ O relentless Heaven, am I thus
“ doomed to trials, which human na-
“ ture can scarce support? It is not
“ in man to bear with fortitude such
“ continual, such remedyless misfor-
“ tunes—I sink under the burthen.
“ My reason, my religion, are too
“ weak to struggle with calamities
“ like these—Why am I obliged to
“ drag on a hated life?—Why
“ may I not resign a gift which
“ only prolongs my torture?—But,
“ since I must support this hated
“ being, let me at least fly from a
“ place once so dear to me, but which
“ now only recalls my misery—I
“ am going, Madam, (alas, what
“ can absence do!) your loved
“ image

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"image will ever accompany me—
"Yet, I will strive—Ah, no, it is
"too deeply rooted in my heart—
"Adieu, then; what words can speak
"my anguish!—How shall I again
"pronounce an eternal adieu; it is
"past—Farewell for ever.

"SE'VIGNÉ."

LET

L E T T E R XLIII.

To LEONORA from ISABELLA.

THE Marquis is gone for
England—Our unfortunate *Julia*
is in imminent danger—Yes, Ma-
dam, death will soon put an end
to all her misery. The Duke is
almost distracted; all possible ad-
vice is procured for her that this
place affords; yet he is not satis-
fied, but will actually go himself
to *Paris*, in order to hasten his too
tardy messengers, though in rea-
lity they do not deserve that re-
proach—Not a domestick in the
house but what would almost give
up

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up their less valuable lives, to save that of their idolized Lady—He is greatly distressed, wishing to go, yet can hardly prevail on himself to leave her—Ah, I see him this moment ready to mount his horse, anxious impatience in his looks—Alas, Madam, I fear then she is still worse than when I left her—Adieu, I hasten to her apartment—

In Continuation.

WE have with difficulty recovered her from a dangerous fit. She, some time after, fell into a gentle slumber, which revives our hopes—Alas, Madam, I hardly know

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know whether I ought to wish for her life, unhappy as it has ever been—I must leave you, and return to the fair sufferer—As the post is just going out, I dispatch this letter, short as it is, lest you should be more alarmed at my silence, than even its fatal contents.

Adieu,

JULIA

LET

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L E T T E R XLIV.

*To Mademoiselle LEONORA DE ***,*

M A D A M,

I Am commanded by Mademoiselle *de Coulanges*, to inform you, that nothing but a rheumatism in her hand, occasioned by a violent cold, should have so long prevented her writing to you; nor would she have delayed letting some other person inform you, that her Grace is now declared out of danger, had she not daily been flattered with the hope that it would soon be in her own power to write the pleasing news which I have now the honour of sending you—

you — Yes, Madam, after a dangerous illness of some weeks; an illness that threw every one into the deepest distress, our charming Lady is now, thank Heaven, restored to our prayers—I am desired to assure you, you have no longer occasion to be alarmed for her safety — It is even believed she will, in a few days, be able to undertake a journey to *Paris*, to which place his Grace has long been desirous of returning, as the winter is so far advanced—

I am, Madam,

With the highest respect,

your most obedient servant,

JEAN DE BERN.

L E T T E R XLV.

To LEONORA from ISABELLA.

A Few lines, to remove your causeless apprehensions, though my hand still renders writing no easy task — Why, Madam, are you still so much alarmed! — Yet it is the natural consequence of a friendship like yours; but you will, I hope, give credit to my assurance, though you seem to doubt that of my amanuensis. Cease to torment yourself; the health — though, alas! not the happiness, of our lovely *Julia* is almost perfectly restored — We begin our journey for *Paris* to-morrow

morrow morning — The Duke has long been weary of retirement; it little suits his taste — Ah, pray Heaven — I tremble for the effect of his Lady's indifference; for an aversion, which, since the receipt of that fatal letter from the Marquis, has been but too openly manifested — The Duke is naturally haughty; such a behaviour as hers now is, must wound his pride — I think there is already some appearance — Why do I give you pain by what I would yet hope my causeless apprehensions — *Sophia* is still with us, and likely to remain so — His Grace takes great pleasure in her company; she is lively, complaisant, studious to oblige, to gain his favour — Ah, she suc-

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ceeds but too well — Good Heavens! — Her engaging conversation seems to console him for the reserve, the coldness of her more lovely sister — A dangerous remedy — But I may be mistaken — Attribute these suspicions to my natural temper — I will write no more, since I am only distressing, by my, perhaps, unjust fears, both you and myself — Adieu, Madam — When the use of my hand is more perfectly restored, expect a more regular correspondent in your

ISABELLA.

L E T.

LETTER XLVI.

To LEONORA.

Paris.

WHAT a world of misery have I suffered since I last wrote to my *Leonora*!—Have, did I say?—Alas, am I not still inexpressibly wretched? Ah, can I ever cease to regard with horror the fatal cause of all my woe—In vain my friend remonstrates—How can I, unaccustomed to dissemble, conceal the feelings of my heart!—How can I feign that love, which he never can inspire!—What! this ravisher, this destroyer of all my hope—Duty

H 3

pleads

pleads in vain—I shudder at the sight of him—Forgive me, heaven—With pain I reflect he is—alas! too sure he is my husband—Oh, that death, so often threatened, would end my misery and life!—What is this life, since I can no longer live for my *Sévigné*!—Would I had never received that fatal letter, which shewed me how near I had been to happiness, only to aggravate my torments—Before that, I had arrived at some degree of melancholy composure—How did I struggle with my refractory heart! I even strove—but it was impossible—Ah, where is now that amiable, that most lovely of men!—He flies from me—It is better for us both that he should—

absolutely

3 H

What

What a desert does this world now appear to me! How I detest its empty amusements! — No; they shall not oblige me to engage in them; my mind alone is free — I will indulge my grief — I will — Alas, how can I avoid it — cherish the memory of — Ah, I am married — You will censure my imprudence. My *Isabella* daily remonstrates; she already pretends to observe a change in the behaviour of — I cannot name him — It is not in my power to prevent it; I will never act so as to have any thing to reproach myself, but I should strive in vain to conquer my indifference; reflect only on the misery he has caused me, and you will then cease to con-

denn — you will rather pity me —
Our house is continually in a tumult — I detest company ; I avoid, as much as possible, being of their parties. My sister supplies my place ; she is fond of dissipation — The Duke is fond of her ; she has a numerous train of admirers — She has desired him to direct her choice — He was pleased with the compliment, but does not seem in haste to make use of the privilege — My brother, my loved *Emilius*, is ill — Heavens, if I should lose him, too — My father is with him ; it is uncertain how long he will be absent — Mean time, *Sophia* remains with us — She is a charming creature, affects to love me with tenderness — But I much
doubt

doubt if she is capable of it—You, my *Leonora*, my friend—Ah, how dear to my heart; you, and my *Isabella* are all my happiness—Nothing but your valued friendships is now left me—Ought I not to be grateful?—I am; what else can I desire?—Pity me, love me, notwithstanding my foibles; I never knew I had so many—They seem daily to encrease, or, rather, misfortunes have taught me the difficult lesson to know myself—Ah, it is not possible to contract a more disagreeable acquaintance—Adieu.

JULIA.

LETTER XLVII.

*To LEONORA from ISABELLA.**Paris.*

I Am distressed beyond measure. Ah, why will not my loved friend pay more attention to my repeated advice? — Alas! I fear — Heavens! no, it cannot be; surely I am alarmed without cause — It is a crime so monstrous, I dare scarce hint a suspicion of it even to to myself — But it is certain, the cold, the mortifying indifference, with which our lovely *Julia* has long treated her once adoring husband, has, in some measure, produced the effect

effect I dreaded— Love cannot long subsist without a mutual return— Weary with fruitless attempts to gain her heart, he seeks in amusements to find that happiness she denies him—His behaviour no longer testifies the desire to please, the tender solicitude which was once so manifest in all his actions—He no longer seeks her—Ah, Madam, he can now but too easily dispense with her presence—that of— But I may be mistaken; I would not form a rash judgment; time will discover whether I have any foundation for apprehensions, which I would earnestly hope are groundless— I am incessantly importuning my friend to assume a greater degree of complai-

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fance for her Lord—Yet I dare not urge the most effectual motive for her change of a conduct, which, though not criminal, is, however, rather imprudent—Alas! who can condemn her? Unfortunate as she has been, how should she love the author of her misfortunes! But if she would not be still more so, there is an absolute necessity for a change in her behaviour—Lovely as she is—Ah, who ever equalled her for charms both of mind and person?—Yet the former is now clouded by a continual sorrow, which she strives not to conquer: And the latter is not alone sufficient, especially where a degree of scorn is added, to efface the impression it makes—How, alas, can

can she expect to retain his slighted heart! She does not even seem to desire it — But that is because her grief is still so predominant; she at present thinks of nothing but the melancholy pleasure of indulging it — The time will come when she will, too late, regret her imprudence. I need not tell you, that the Duke has violent passions; nor that he seldom denies himself the means of gratifying them. Should he — but Heaven forbid — The Chevalier *de Valliere* is perfectly recovered, he is soon expected in *Paris*; his father returned some days ago; yet *Sophia* is still with us, could not bear the thoughts of leaving her sister — So she says, and weeps — or affects to weep,

to confirm it—I believe, indeed, she would leave us with regret; but from what motive?—Ah, let me not judge—I know too little of her, and, perhaps, do her injustice—There can hardly be a more charming young creature; as to person I mean—Her manner, too, though educated in a Convent; though she has so short a time made her appearance in the *beau monde*, she has a sufficient share of the *bon ton*, an air gay and *degagée*, even a little coquette sometimes; her sprightly conversation greatly amuses the Duke—Pray, Heaven, it may do no more! She does the honours of his house with a grace peculiar to herself—To do her justice, she is
not

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not in the least embarrassed with timidity—Do you wonder what I mean, by her doing the honours of his house?—Ah, why does the lovely owner of it resign to her that privilege!—Pretended, and frequently real indisposition, are her excuses for not being of our parties—I might more justly say their—My *Julia* is all the world to me; I as seldom join in them as her; nevertheless, all the world visit here—Her Grace receives their compliments on their first entrance, then retires—The Duke, however, testifies neither displeasure nor regret, at her absence—What a change!—Alas, it is but too true, as has often been observed, that violent passions are never lasting:
they

they have been married but four months; for the two first, spite of her aversion, he adored her; for the others, he sees her with indifference — I make no doubt, this would, at any rate, have happened in the end; yet her behaviour to him has, I much fear, greatly hastened the period of his affection — Alas, once lost Love is seldom to be regained! — But I will once more try my influence over her, perhaps his coolness is only assumed to try what effect it will produce — A degree of tenderness on her part — Ah, I would hope it is not yet too late — Adieu, Madam — The Baron is to spend the evening with us; he is come — The Chevalier, too — My

Julia

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Julia has been with me, she bids me hasten to follow her—With the fondest affection, she flew to welcome her loved *Emilius*—Once more adieu.

ISABELLA.

LET.

L E T T E R XLVIII.
To LEONORA from ISABELLA.

AH, I can no longer doubt it!—This imprudent *Sophia*!—The Duke is less to blame than her—Could you believe it, Madam?—Good Heaven, I tremble but to think of it! She certainly—Alas, she certainly loves him!—A thousand dreadful symptoms!—Such looks!—Such a behaviour!—What a dangerous temptation for one of his character!—I doubt not, however, she has virtue enough to shudder even at the thoughts of her being capable—No, she suspects
not

not to what criminal lengths a passion, which at present she is scarce sensible of, may lead her—She finds a pleasure in his company; she suffers his caresses, because she believes she may innocently indulge them—Ah, she knows not the danger to which she exposes herself; the Duke is extremely amiable—All the world, but our charming friend, allows him to be handsome—I tremble for this gay, this imprudent *Sophia*—Why is she still here—What pretence shall I invent to get her removed? I dare not hint my dreadful suspicions to our *Julia*, yet—But how can I bear to add so greatly to her affliction—She yields, at last, to my persuasion—Alas, her condescension
comes

comes too late! Her complaisance, though mixed with a degree of tenderness, has now no better effect than her late cold indifference—The Duke seems quite insensible to this prudent change in her behaviour—The specious, the superficial graces of the more sprightly *Sophia*—Gracious Heaven, how I am distressed!—We had last night a great deal of company. Her Grace no longer refuses to join the insipid croud. There were a great number of card-tables—She played—Her sister was in a different party—I kept myself disengaged, to observe her behaviour—The Duke stood leaning over her chair—He spoke frequently to her in whispers—She
turned

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turned her head with looks—Heavens, I cannot bear the recollection—The croud dispersed at last, after a tedious evening—A more select party removed to sup with us—Every body was gay—Even our lovely friend suffered some brilliant sallies of that lively wit, which misfortunes had so long clouded, to escape her—The sprightly *Sophia* assumed an air of tender languishment; some of her admirers were present; they, no doubt, flattered themselves, they had inspired it—But I, alas, had reason to attribute it to a different object—We had a little concert; several of the Ladies joined their voices to the instruments—The Duke desired *Sophia* to oblige, in her turn—Oh, there

there was no fear of a refusal—She sung, and accompanied it with the harpsichord—There is but too much grace in every thing she does—The air she played was soft, and soothingly plaintive—Some of the words I remember—

In love to pine and languish,
Yet dare not tell my pain.—

Her eyes were as expressive as those imprudently chosen lines—Yes, it is but too plain—Her youth, her inexperience—Ah, there is no excuse for a crime like hers—Young as she is, she cannot be ignorant, that her sentiments for him are too tender for those of friendship—Our *Julia* has not, I am convinced, the least

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least suspicion ; or, for her sister's sake more than her own, she would take some necessary precautions to stop this dreadful passion, ere it is too firmly rooted—I must, then—Yes, I will reveal the fatal secret—What a task !—But should I be mistaken—Ah, if I have injured her, by unjust suspicions ; I will not be too precipitate ; I doubt my own senses—Surely it cannot be ; such an education as she has received, such care as has been taken, to instil into her young mind the sentiments of piety and virtue—No, it is impossible ; I will examine her behaviour with more attention—It surely must be a considerable time ere she can so far forget what she
owes

owes to modesty, to duty, to affection, as to be able—It is not in nature—A crime like this—How I am distressed—I am resolved to speak to her in private—Love shall be the subject; her confusion, if she is guilty, will betray her; should that be the case, some distant hints, such, however, as she shall not fail to understand, may awaken her slumbering virtue, perhaps her shame and remorse—Adieu, Madam, I shall never forgive myself, if I have alarmed you without cause; but it proceeds from my tender sensibility in all that concerns our charming friend

Yours,

ISABELLA.

L E T.

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LETTER XLIX.

To LEONORA.

YES, my *Leonora*, I yield at last to your kind intreaties—To my *Isabella*—I submit—Ah, I have but too long murmured at a destiny for which Heaven ordained me; if I cannot direct the feelings of my refractory heart; if I cannot love, I at least endeavour to esteem; and study, in every action, to discharge my duty—I even begin to experience some little degree of tenderness for this once—I dare not look back; alas, I have reason to reproach myself for a conduct that was but too

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blame-

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blameable — Yet, ah, remember what I have suffered, and pity me — It was with infinite struggles, I at first obliged myself to look, without aversion, on him who had been the fatal cause of so much woe; but those struggles are now at an end: I shall soon, in all probability, have a new, and more endearing tie than duty, to awaken my tenderness — Yes, the father of my child must ever be dear to me, should I become a mother — Ah, what delightful sensations do I begin to experience! — Yet a sigh will now and then escape me! — O memory! — Alas, I was not born to happiness! — It is not the painful recollection of past scenes that alone afflicts

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afflicts me—This husband, once so passionate—This husband, who adored me, when I made so little return to his tenderness—Now I endeavour to merit it—Ah, it is now his turn to tyrannize; such is the caprice of men!—But I submit; I have too much reason to reproach myself as the cause of this amazing change—That reflection aggravates my distress; yet may I not hope, if it is not owing to natural inconstancy, my condescension, my tenderness, may once more awaken his—Yes, I do not despair, since I have reason to believe no other object has possession of that heart, which my indifference alone has restored to liberty—His behaviour to me, though

less passionately assiduous, is nevertheless respectfully complaisant; though he no longer loves with fervour, he continues to esteem me—I am satisfied, if he does not likewise deprive me of that; it is painful to be a continual witness to a passion that solicits a return which we ought, but cannot bestow—Though the Duke is of a gay disposition, though he is fond of amusement and dissipation, yet I have the satisfaction to see he engages in none that are criminal; he loves company, but he loves to mix in it at his own house—I endeavour to conform to his taste, and no longer absent myself from our frequent parties; they are no less brilliant than numerous: the
charms

charms of my sister, as I before told you, attract a crowd of admirers — I earnestly wish to see her honourably and advantageously disposed of ; but she is young, full of levity, and not yet capable of a serious attachment ; pleased with admiration, but cautious of making distinctions in favour of any one — Her conduct certainly borders too much on the coquet ; I frequently remonstrate against a behaviour which I cannot approve — She hears me with patience, she even seems affected, promises amendment, but as often breaks her promise — My father is very fond of her, yet denies himself the pleasure of her living with him, believing it more prudent

to leave her under my protection—
My *Isabella*, from what motive I cannot guess, is of a contrary opinion—She thinks it might have a good effect, might give her a graver turn, if she was, for a few months, to pay a visit to my aunt; at her request I proposed it—Told my sister it was a necessary compliment that the Marchioness might justly expect, since she had so often expressed a desire to see her—*Sophia* flung her arms round my neck—Ah, send me not to that morose old woman, cried she, bursting into tears, I die at the thoughts of it—Let me but stay with you, my dearest *Julia*, and indeed I will be every thing you desire: I will be
more

more sedate, I will copy your amiable example ; ah, where can I go to have one so charming ?—The Duke was made acquainted with my proposal ; he, too, opposed it : It would be cruel to bury her in the country with an unfociable devotée, said he—What purpose would it answer ? — She stays then — I should tenderly love the dear girl, if she had a little more solidity, if she were capable of a return to that sincere friendship I feel for her, and would be as studious as I am for her own true happiness.

Adieu, my *Leonora*,

Believe me ever yours,

JULIA.

L E T T E R L.

To LEONORA *from* ISABELLA.

I Had this morning a private conversation with *Sophia*; but it was unfortunately interrupted ere I had sufficiently explained myself—She was alone in her dressing-room, her head leaning on her hand, a book in the other; I guessed the nature of her study, by the air of tender languishment that was visible in her countenance—She blushed a little at my unexpected appearance—You are very gravely employed, my dear *Sophia*, said I; I should not imagine reading to one of your gay disposition

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sition, would be a favourite amusement — You are mistaken, returned she, there is nothing I am so fond of—And, pray, said I, smiling, may one ask, What it is that engrosses your present attention?—Not much of my attention neither, cried she, carelessly, I was reading the Princess of Cleves.—Oh then, resumed I, I will answer for it, I was not mistaken in supposing you attentive; but, in my opinion, it is a dangerous Romance; indeed, they are almost all so—Why dangerous?—Because it sets vice in a too amiable light!—Vice, repeated she; I do not understand you; I am sure, if you have read it, which I cannot help doubting, you will, on the contrary,

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it inculcates the strictest virtue—Ah, how I admire the charming Princess, with a heart so passionate, so susceptible, yet a conduct so prudent!—And do you not likewise admire the Duke, said I, looking attentively at her, but affecting to smile; she blushed excessively—He, too, was violently passionate and susceptible, continued I, but what do you think of his indulging that passion for a married woman?—How could he help it! returned she, with quickness—Alas, my dear, Romances have given you a false idea of love; trust me, it is not that irresistible, that enthusiastic chimera they represent; there is not the least shadow of excuse, for the crime
your

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your imaginary hero wilfully persisted in — The Princess is equally faulty, she was married; duty, her solemn vows—Ah, why did she not conquer her unjustifiable weakness?—The Duke was no less guilty; how durst he indulge himself in a criminal passion? — Heavens, we ought to shudder, even at the idea of adultery: we ought to remember, that a bare wish, the faintest desire, is as criminal as the horrid action!—You are very severe, *Isabella* — Not more than the subject deserves—What do you say to my sister, then; I am sure she loves the Marquis better than her Lord?—She did, I allow, but not now, believe me. There were some very unfortunate

I 6,

circum-

circumstances attending her marriage, nobody could wonder at her grief and resentment; yet you see, in her, the very example I should wish every young Lady to copy; you see how her duty, how her virtue, triumphs over every other passion; you never hear her mention the once loved Marquis — Nay, I am persuaded, she does not even permit herself to think of him — How different is her conduct from that of your admired Princess? — I do not wonder at my sister, such a husband as — She stopped — An involuntary sigh escaped her — Proceed, my dear *Sophia*, what of that husband? I do not know what I was going to say! But of this I am sure,

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sure, that it can never be such a violent crime as you pretend, to indulge one's self in the innocent satisfaction of loving with purity an amiable object—Nobody would pretend it is, provided that amiable object is not the wife, or husband of another—I looked fixedly on her, she blushed excessively—Suppose he is, what harm can there be in a mere Platonic passion, or rather a tender friendship?—I hope you do not express your real sentiments!—Heavens, I would not for the world, they should be so depraved!—Platonic passion, indeed!—Ah, we ought to shudder at the thoughts of any kind of passion for the husband of another—At that moment, I
was

was unfortunately interrupted, by the sudden entrance of the Duke—*Sophia* hastily rose, and hurried into her closet—Tears were in her eyes—How I rejoice, that I have been able to make any impression on her—I shall take the first opportunity to renew the subject, and am not without hopes it may produce the effect I so ardently wish—She continued in her closet, till summoned to dinner—Her eyes shewed she had been weeping—The Duke was tenderly solicitous to know the cause of her tears—A head-ach, she said, a slight indisposition—She appeared very melancholy, frequent sighs escaped her; contrary to her usual custom, she avoided looking at him, whose eyes were,

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were, however, with but too much softness, continually fixed on her downcast face—After dinner, I retired to write.

Ah, Madam, I see the Duke and her, from my windows, this instant gone into the garden—They enter a summer-house—Heavens!—Alas! I fear his wicked eloquence will soon efface the impression of my morning lecture—I hasten to join them—No matter what they think of my necessary—but to them, perhaps, unseasonable interruption.

Adieu,

ISABELLA.

L E T.

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L E T T E R L I.

To the SAME from ISABELLA.

I Tremble to think what might have been the consequence, if my timely presence had not seasonably interrupted a scene that had but too criminal an appearance—I told you, in my last, that I followed *Sophia* and the Duke into the garden; they were so earnestly engaged, one in pleading his dreadful passion, the other in listening, that I entered the arbour before they observed my approach — He was kneeling at her feet, holding one of her hands, which the imprudent *Sophia* did not attempt

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attempt to withdraw — You may imagine what emotions my unexpected appearance produced — To own the truth, I was in no less confusion than the guilty pair — The Duke hastily arose from his supplicating posture, and darting at me a look that spoke his indignation, precipitately hurried out of the bower — *Sophia*, overcome with shame, uttered a scream, and sunk backwards on the seat, where she, for some moments, continued insensible — When she recovered, raising her eyes to Heaven, with a look of anguish — she burst into tears — I took the opportunity, while her heart was softened, and most likely to receive the impressions I wished, to set before

fore her the heinousness of her crime; yet I did it with all the tenderness of a friend; told her I had long observed, and trembled for her criminal passion; entreated her to reflect on the misery, the shame it would, if indulged, plunge her into; reminded her of what she owed to virtue, to the honour of her family, and to an amiable sister, who loved her with such ill-requited tenderness—Could she be so ungrateful, so lost to all sense of goodness?—Ah, no, I hoped she would yet timely conquer, that she would detest a criminal weakness, already too long, too fatally indulged—While I spoke, she appeared in the most violent agitations; the tears continued

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continued to stream from her eyes—
I could not help pitying her, guilty,
at least in intention, as she was—
At last she rose, and, clasping her
hands, with an air almost frantic—
Wretch that I am, cried she, where
shall I fly to hide my head!—O that
death would put an end to my
misery!—She had hardly uttered
those words, when she ran from
me, with the utmost swiftness; she
has ever since been shut up in her
apartment, where I have been re-
fused admittance—Our *Julia* knows
not, nor ever shall, if I can pre-
vent it, any thing of this horrid
adventure—I have not yet seen the
Duke—What have I not to dread
from his resentment?—No matter;
I have

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I have done no more than what friendship, than what my duty required — Adieu, Madam, Heaven knows how this affair will end — The Duchefs writes to you by this post; if my letter gives you pain, hearing from your loved friend, will, I hope, console you; once more adieu.

ISABELLA.

L E T:

L E T T E R LII.

To LEONORA from ISABELLA.

THE poor *Sophia* is extremely ill — I am not surprized at it — Such a struggle as she must have between a guilty passion, and a remaining love of virtue, as well as the emotion my presence at a certain interview was doubtless the cause of — Her sister is hardly ever absent from her apartment; nothing can equal the tender sollicitude she expresses for her recovery — How this unaffected kindness must wound the too guilty *Sophia* — The physicians seem to think her in danger—

ger — Yet, I hope, youth, and a naturally good constitution, will baffle the force of her disorder — I have seen the Duke at last, though after the adventure in the garden he went, for a few days, to one of his country seats, from which he returned this morning — Nothing could equal the shock he visibly received when told of *Sophia's* illness; yet he endeavoured, as much as possible, to conceal his grief — If she should—which Heaven grant she may — recover — have we not reason to hope her dangerous sickness, so near a prospect of the grave, may produce the most salutary effects?—I trust it will; it is my daily, my earnest prayer; let yours be added,

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added, Madam ; I know they will, notwithstanding the too just dislike you have conceived for her ; that dislike will, I doubt not, give place to more favourable sentiments, when she has rendered herself, in some measure, worthy your esteem—Adieu, I go to relieve my friend ; I fear she will endanger her health, by her anxiety, and want of rest—I am informed the Baron is now with his daughter—It is impossible to express the poignancy of his grief for her illness.

Yours,

ISABELLA.

L E T.

LETTER LIII.

To LEONORA from ISABELLA.

BELIEVE me, Madam, you should not have had reason to reproach me for my long silence, if I had had leisure for writing, or any thing material to say to you—Our affairs have, at last, taken the turn I wished. *Sophia*, thank Heaven, is perfectly recovered, to the inexpressible joy of our lovely friend; the Duke's, though less openly manifested, is, I doubt not, equally sincere—Now listen, Madam, and, with me, admire the effects of divine grace; with me, esteem the
once

once guilty, but now penitent *Sophia*—
Nothing but excessive weakness remained of her late dangerous illness; she had not yet, however, been able to leave her apartment. The Duke's visits were frequent, but as her Grace or myself were always present, nothing particular could pass between them; *Sophia* had, indeed, cautiously avoided either speaking or looking at him. There appeared nothing singular in such a behaviour, as she was still so imperfectly recovered. I was the other morning alone with her, in her apartment; she was dressed, but lay reclined on a couch. We continued silent some time, while the tears stole down her cheek—I was going

to speak; you may guess the subject I intended insensibly to lead to, but at that instant a servant informed me, her Grace begged to see me for a few moments—I hastened to her; she was writing to you; she desired me to read what she had wrote; I took the letter, but had hardly glanced my eyes over the first line, when the door opened, and the pale, the dejected *Sophia*, supported by her attendants, made her unexpected appearance—Our friend ran to embrace her, surprized at a visit so unlooked for—She was even beginning to chide her, in a tender manner, for so soon venturing to leave her apartment—*Sophia* made no answer, but ordering her maids
to

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to retire, disengaging herself from the arms of her affectionate sister, she cast herself at her feet—Ah, my *Julia*, my much injured sister; cried she, how little do I deserve this tenderness—Speak, *Isabella*, my strength fails; reveal my monstrous crime, and compleat my just confusion and remorse. She burst into tears, and hid her blushing face in the lap of our fair friend, who was all astonishment, as you may well imagine—Finding it in vain to intreat the afflicted *Sophia* to rise, she knelt down by her; she pressed the weeping mourner to her breast—Though you have injured me, my lovely girl, why this deep humility?—Ah, do you then doubt my readi-

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ness to pardon?—Alas, my sister, a crime like mine (sobbed out the penitent *Sophia*,) you cannot, ought not to forgive me—I never will forgive myself—But I will, cried her Grace, with fervour, again embracing—Be it what it will, I forgive you; rise then, my dearest sister; be comforted, I cannot bear your tears; your grief affects me; depend on my friendship; put some confidence in me; tell me the cause of this distress; yet do not, if it will give you any pain: You sigh—Ah, let it then be buried in oblivion—I am too minute, I shall swell this letter to a volume; it is sufficient to inform you, that she made an ingenuous confession of the commencement

ment and progress of her guilty passion; which, though it had not led her to any criminal lengths, was a crime sufficiently dreadful of itself: as such, she now regarded it, though too long blinded, by its fatal influence, to see either her danger or the crime in a true light; how far, imprudent as she was, it might have entangled her unexperienced heart, she now trembled to think of, had not the mercy of Heaven, and my watchfulness, saved her from the imminent danger to which she was exposed—I observed, (I hope, and believe, it was on her sister's account,) that she endeavoured, as much as possible, to clear the Duke—After a thousand intreaties for a

K 3

pardon,

ness to pardon?—Alas, my ~~sister~~, a crime like mine (sobbed out the penitent *Sophia*,) you cannot, ought not to forgive me—I never will forgive myself—But I will, cried her Grace, with fervour, again embracing—Be it what it will, I forgive you; rise then, my dearest sister; be comforted, I cannot bear your tears; your grief affects me; depend on my friendship; put some confidence in me; tell me the cause of this distress; yet do not, if it will give you any pain: You sigh—Ah, let it then be buried in oblivion—I am too minute, I shall swell this letter to a volume; it is sufficient to inform you, that she made an ingenuous confession of the commencement

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pardon, which was, with her lovely sister's usual goodness, easily obtained, she declared her fixed resolution to retire into a convent; if not for life, at least till a severe mortification, a sincere penitence, had atoned for her faults — The Duchess did not oppose her pious resolution — Her father was informed of her desire, he made but few objections; those were easily answered, you may believe; however, he was ignorant of her motives, and only attributes it to a lowness of spirits, occasioned by her illness; he consents with the less reluctance, as the convent *de St. ****, which she has chosen, the same where she was educated, is situated at some distance

distance from *Paris*, believing the change of air will be most likely to re-establish her health. Her retreat is then determined on, and only deferred till she is able to undertake the journey; she is greatly impatient for that time; her Grace is to conduct her; at her desire, I am likewise to be of the party — Do you ask in what manner the Duke behaves all this time, and how he is reconciled to the intended departure of his mistress? — There is no judging of his real sentiments from outward appearance; he has too much art to suffer them to be easily penetrated; perhaps, he is the less concerned, as he, no doubt, indulges the flattering hope of seeing her

K 4 frequently

frequently at the convent, ignorant of her motives for retiring; little suspecting she has made a confidant of his Lady, he is, therefore, the more at ease — He finds no opportunity, which yet I see he is continually watching for, of speaking to her in private — Do you not think he must heartily hate me? — But that gives me little concern; thank Heaven, one of my greatest uneasinesses is now removed.

Adieu.

ISABELLA.

LET.

LETTER LIV.

TO LEONORA.

WOULD to Heaven you could confirm the dear hope, you some time ago gave me leave to indulge, of your paying me a visit in *Paris* — Oh, my *Leonora*, must I never more enjoy your loved society? Are we then destined to be for ever separated? I conjure you come; how I long to embrace you; the very thought gives me a foretaste of the happiness I should then enjoy — I yesterday conducted my sister to the convent; our parting was infinitely mov-

ing—Alas ! did I not tell you this man never truly loved me — Ah, would the tender, the amiable *Sévigné* have used me so!—I stop my refractory pen ; he is my husband—An involuntary burst of tears has a little relieved my heart—Why do I weep, *Leonora* ? — What avail my tears, and my complaints ; yet am I not to be pitied ; deprived of happiness, forcibly torn from the only man I ever loved !—Good Heavens, with what sincerity I loved him — Consigned to him who has caused all my misery, to him who now regards me with indifference — Ah, where is now that amiable *Sévigné* ? Do you think he still remembers the unfortunate *Julia* ?—I will write no
more

more to-day, I only expose myself—
I find a return of all my former
weakness—Company—how unseason-
able! what shall I say to them?
Alas! I am much unfit for their
gay society—But I must go—

Adieu,

JULIA

K 6

L E T

L E T T E R L V.

To LEONORA from ISABELLA.

WHAT a severe shock! Ah, Madam, how I am alarmed, how I pity the unfortunate Duke!—He was, within these few hours, brought home dangerously wounded—I can get no intelligence how this fatal accident happened—The surgeons who attend him, give us but little hopes of his recovery; they have not, however, pronounced them mortal—The Duchess is fortunately on a visit, which has saved her the dreadful alarm it must have given her, had she seen him brought home

home in the condition he was, covered with blood—I must go, lest she should return and be too precipitately informed of this melancholy adventure—

Adieu.

A
Madam, in spite of all my caution, the dreadful news had the most fatal effect on our gentle friends; the grief, the surprise—Alas! she called out a moment the transport of being a mother, ere the poor infant, born before its time, expired—I will dispart this letter; for as it is, you may believe, a frightful scene of distress, I have but little leisure for writing—Do not be too much alarmed, they

L E T

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L E T T E R LVI

From the SAME.

Tuesday morning.

AH, Madam, in spite of all my caution, the dreadful news had the most fatal effect on our gentle friend; the grief, the surprize — Alas! she tasted but a moment the transport of being a mother, ere the poor infant, born before its time, expired—I will dispatch this letter; short as it is, you may believe, amidst such scenes of distress, I have but little leisure for writing — Do not be too much alarmed; they assure

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assure me our *Julia* is not in the
least danger—

Adieu.

ISABELLA

LET

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LETTER LVII.

To LEONORA from ISABELLA.

WHAT a week have I passed!—Alas! Madam, I am deeply afflicted at his untimely fate! I no longer remember his faults; may they be buried in his tomb—Need I more plainly tell you, the Duke is no more—He expired this morning—In spite of all my persuasions, when he heard—and there was no concealing it from him—that his Lady was ill, he insisted on being carried to her apartment—I prepared her, as well as I could, for the moving interview—moving, indeed!—

indeed !—There is no describing it—
He confessed his fault ; implored
her pardon ; repeatedly protested he
had never ceased to love her ; but
her cold indifference — yet he de-
served it—He should reproach him-
self till his last moment, on account
of her sister ; he mentioned her with
the utmost confusion — But Heaven
has severely punished me, cried he—
Ah, can there be a greater, than to
be forced to bid you an eternal
adieu !—Death is nothing compared
to that : Can you forgive me ? —
He looked at her with the most
tender woe — He pressed her hand
to his lips, whilst she, weeping, and
in a faltering voice, assured him of
her forgiveness, and earnestly prayed
for

for his future happiness — He found the fatal hour approaching — With inexpressible grief he took a last embrace, and ordered himself to be again conducted to his own apartment, lest the sight of his death should too much affect her — He manifested uncommon fortitude during his painful illness; and met death without the least appearance of terror — Do not be too apprehensive; they positively assure me our lovely friend is in no danger — What I heard as to the particulars of the duel, are as follow — The Duke had, that fatal morning, been to pay a visit at the convent, to which *Sophia* has retired — He was refused permission to see her — Highly

exasperated at this refusal, he continued peremptorily to insist on being admitted — While he was engaged in this dispute with one of the nuns, the Chevalier *de ****, an admirer of *Sophia's*, came out of an adjacent parlour, where he had been indulged in an interview with his mistress — A favour that would not, however, have been granted, had he not brought a letter from her father — The Duke stopped him as he was going, and demanded, with an air of haughtiness, what business he had there? — The other, piqued at the question, and the insolent air with which it was asked, told him, that was not a fit place to give him an answer in, but if he would follow

follow him, he should be satisfied—
They went out together, resentment
in their looks—What farther conversation passed between them, is
unknown, and most likely will ever
remain so, as the Chevalier, who
alone can reveal it, left *Paris* immediately after the fatal rencounter—
The Baron is ignorant—even of
these few particulars, and little suspects
the cause of the duel—I
have received a letter from the
truly penitent *Sophia*—Nothing can
equal her grief—She now declares
a fixed resolution of taking the veil,
as soon as her year of probation is
expired—I send you her epistle,
which will best express the situation
of her mind, the sincerity of her
sorrow

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sorrow and repentance—The Chevalier is below—I did not know he had been in *Paris*—I must attend him,

Adieu,

ISABELLA

LET

LETTER LVIII.

To LEONORA from ISABELLA.

IT is now a fortnight since the Duke was interred, with a pomp and grandeur becoming his rank — Ah, what avail those empty honours, that vain pageantry, which only consigns him to the silent tomb, where the lifeless body, unconscious of its dignity, like the common beggar, mixes with its kindred earth? — The Chevalier spends most of his time here, in hopes his company may be a consolation to his afflicted sister — In spite of the general melancholy, you may believe it

is

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is natural for me to look forward with reviving hopes, to an event which has, by so many misfortunes, been deferred — But I have a thousand fears — Who knows what is become of the Marquis; whether he is still single, whether he still loves? — Heavens, if he should not! — I ventured this morning to mention him to our *Julia*; surely it was no great breach of decorum — Yet she stopped me with an air of displeasure — Ah, name him not, *Isabella*, cried she, sighing, alas, was it not on his account I did injustice to the tenderness of a husband who once adored me; ungrateful as I have been, what penitence can atone for my breach of duty? — Forcibly

as

as I became, I was still his wife—
Ah, have I not his very crimes to
reproach myself with? Had I repaid
his love, he never would have been
unfaithful. Good heavens, was I
then the cause of his death! of a
death like his?—I tremble at the
thought—Ah, I shall for ever la-
ment my imprudence! But my fu-
ture life—Yes, I will make repara-
tion for my faults, it shall be spent
in penitence; talk not, then, I be-
seech you, of one I must struggle
to forget; may he be happy—May
the dear *Sévigné* be happy—But
never will I be a sharer in that
happiness—No, my relish for retire-
ment returns—There, my friend, I
will again seek that consolation,
which

which the tumultuous world denies me—It is in the happy asylum of a convent I can alone hope to regain my long lost peace—I gently remonstrated—But she was deaf to my arguments—Time only can produce the change I wish. The presence of her Lover might do much to hasten it; but how, alas, is that to be procured?—Ah, where is now that most amiable of men?

Adieu, Madam,

Believe me sincerely yours,

ISABELLA.

L E T T E R LIX.

To LEONORA from ISABELLA.

A GAIN you complain of my long silence. Alas, Madam, what have I to write to you! I am weary of continual melancholy subjects—We have now been near two months in the convent *de St. ****, where *Sophia* is more firmly than ever, notwithstanding the tender remonstrances of her father, determined to end her days—The company of our fair *Julia* gives her the highest consolation; there never was a more endearing friendship than what now subsists between
those

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those two amiable and unfortunate sisters—Their uncommon piety edifies the whole community, and attracts universal admiration—What cannot Divine Grace effect? The once imprudent, the volatile, the too gay *Sophia*, is now a pattern of virtue, of discretion, and every Christian perfection! — But come, Madam, you give us some hopes of seeing you — Come, and be witness to our returning happiness — My friend's letter will convince you of the joy, the delightful prospect of your presence gives her — But, alas, where is the Marquis all this while! Till he comes, my wishes are but half accomplished — There are yet, I would flatter myself, more lively

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joys in store for our lovely *Julia*—
Heaven will surely at last reward
her for her many misfortunes, by a
union with that charming man ;
with him, whose many virtues, whose
constant love, can alone merit so
much beauty and perfection.

Adieu,

ISABELLA.

L E T.

L E T T E R LX.

To LEONORA from ISABELLA.

AH, Madam, what a scene have I been witness to! My friend was yesterday informed, that an Ecclesiastic was in the parlour, who begged the honour of seeing her, as he had something of importance to communicate—She desired me to accompany her—We went down together—We found a reverend Friar, of a venerable appearance, who respectfully rose on our entrance—The lovely *Julia* questioned him, with an air of sweetness, on the cause of his visit: He advanced, and present-

L 3

ing

ing a small gold case, which, on opening, she found to contain her picture, the same she had formerly given to the Marquis—I was desired, Madam, (said the good man) to deliver this to you, by a young Gentleman, almost the moment before he expired, and to assure you, notwithstanding your inconstancy, he had never ceased to love you with the tenderest affection; that he died—Died, cried she, in an agony of grief!—Dead!—Ah, my *Sévigné*—Lost, miserable *Julia*—She fainted—What have I done, cried he, in a voice that discovered him to be the Marquis, running to support her—Ah, my life, my love, speak to me, it is your *Sévigné* intreats it—
Judge

Judge of my joy—He pressed her to his breast, his tender careffes soon recalled her to life—She looked steadfastly on him; she knew him in spite of his disguise; her surprize, her extasy, had almost a second time deprived her of sense—She reclined her head on his shoulder, unable to speak, while he clasped her in his arms, and poured forth the fulness of his joy, in the most rapturous expressions. She at last disengaged herself from his embrace. She chid him, but with an air of infinite softness, for thus alarming her—He cast himself at her feet; Forgive me, my adorable *Julia*, said he, forgive this innocent stratagem, which love invented, that I

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might know your real sentiments—
Had I not reason to believe you in-
constant—Ah, what has not that
seeming inconstancy cost me! I heard
from all the world of the excessive
grief, into which the death of him,
whom I consequently believed a be-
loved husband, had plunged you—
This threw me into despair. I would
again have quitted *France*, but a
passion, which nothing could con-
quer, still detained me; the disguise
I assumed was the only infallible
method I could take, either to con-
firm, or remove my tormenting
doubts, the only way to arrive at
the knowledge of your dear senti-
ments for me—Without this know-
ledge, I must for ever have been
wretched—

wretched — But you are not inconstant — Ah, no my angel, your eyes confirm the enchanting hope, that I am still beloved — Gracious Heaven, how amply am I rewarded for all my sufferings — She raised him, for he was still kneeling, with an air of blushing tenderness — It is in vain to dissemble — You took me by surprize, said she, smiling; holding out her hand, which he rapturously pressed to his lips; but remember, Marquis, your constancy, your patience, will yet be put to a farther trial; it will be some time ere I shall be prevailed on to leave my retreat — A letter is this moment brought me — It is from you, a thousand thanks to my obliging

L 5 friend —

friend—You are then, indeed, going to fulfil your promise; thank Heaven, our *Julia's* happiness will then be complete—I shall say no more of the Lovers—Come and see, come and partake of their felicity, and judge yourself if they are not the most lovely, the most accomplished pair in the world—Come and join your intreaties to those of the charming Marquis and her friend, that she would shorten the term of his probation—If she will be so severely punctilious, as to finish her year of mourning—Ah, she looks so enchanting in her weeds, it is no wonder she is unwilling to quit them—But seriously, if she will not alter her resolution, let us, at least, persuade

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persuade her to quit—for a world, to which she can no longer be indifferent—her too melancholy retreat—I dare not take time to lengthen my letter, though I have a thousand joyful things to say to you—Perhaps you will be here ere it can reach you—Adieu, then—What a change! I can now subscribe myself your truly happy

ISABELLA.

By the EDITOR.

LEONORA continued in *Paris* till she saw her friend and the amiable Marquis happy in an union that promised the most lasting felicity—On the evening

L 6

of

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of their nuptials, *Isabella*, agreeable to a promise she had made the fair Religious, who had some weeks before taken the veil, and exchanged the name of *Sophia* for that of *Louisa*, wrote her the following letter.

L E T.

L E T T E R LXI.

To Sister LOUISA from ISABELLA.

YOUR prayers, my lovely sister,
are at last heard — Our *Julia*
is happy to the utmost of her
wishes — This morning saw two of
the tenderest hearts that ever were
formed, united — No, they were be-
fore united; a solemn ceremony only
sanctified the endearing union — In
the midst of gaiety, I forgot not
my promise to the charming *Louisa*,
and stole from the joyous society
of select friends, to make her a
partaker of our happiness — Yes, I
know the tender interest you take
in

in every thing that concerns your adorable sister—Ah, it is impossible to give you an idea of her beauty! Ever lovely, she, this day, is more so than can be expressed—All the Graces are in her train, dressed in the most elegant taste—How infinitely charming does she appear in those flowing robes of spotless white—And then her looks, so modestly sweet, so engagingly amiable—Her fine eyes have such a bewitching tenderness in them, especially when directed to the Marquis—Judge what must be his transports—He himself is an angel, and has all the eloquence of one—Heavens, what a different appearance does he this day make, from what he did formerly,

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formerly, on a like occasion—Such expression in his countenance—Eyes so sparkling, so intelligent!—His every action so graceful!—Such an enchanting behaviour to his bride!—Such delicate tenderness!—I am interrupted—I had yet a thousand things to say to you in regard to yourself—No matter, I shall have the pleasure of seeing you in a few days; and if my wishes are gratified, will spend a week or two at your convent—Ah, how I love that dear society—How I am charmed, how I am edified with your conversation, in particular—I promise myself a thousand happy hours in your company—Adieu, my pious, my amiable sister; be assured of
a tender

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a tender interest in the heart of
your

ISABELLA.

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